

# CASEBOOK CLASSIC

First Edition  
Conference Special

# CRIME

HARRY ROBERTS BY BEN JOHNSON

PEASENHALL MURDER

BY LINDA STRATMANN

MURDER MOVIES & FATTY ARBUCKLE

BY ALEX KING

WILLIAM CORDER & THE RED BARN

BY SUE PARRY



MURDER

ALSO INSIDE: RESULTS OF THE TRUE CRIME SURVEY - BY FROGG MOODY... ALSO NEWS OF THE CASEBOOK CLASSIC CRIME LONDON CONFERENCE 2015

# INSIDE INFORMATION

## CASEBOOK: CLASSIC CRIME

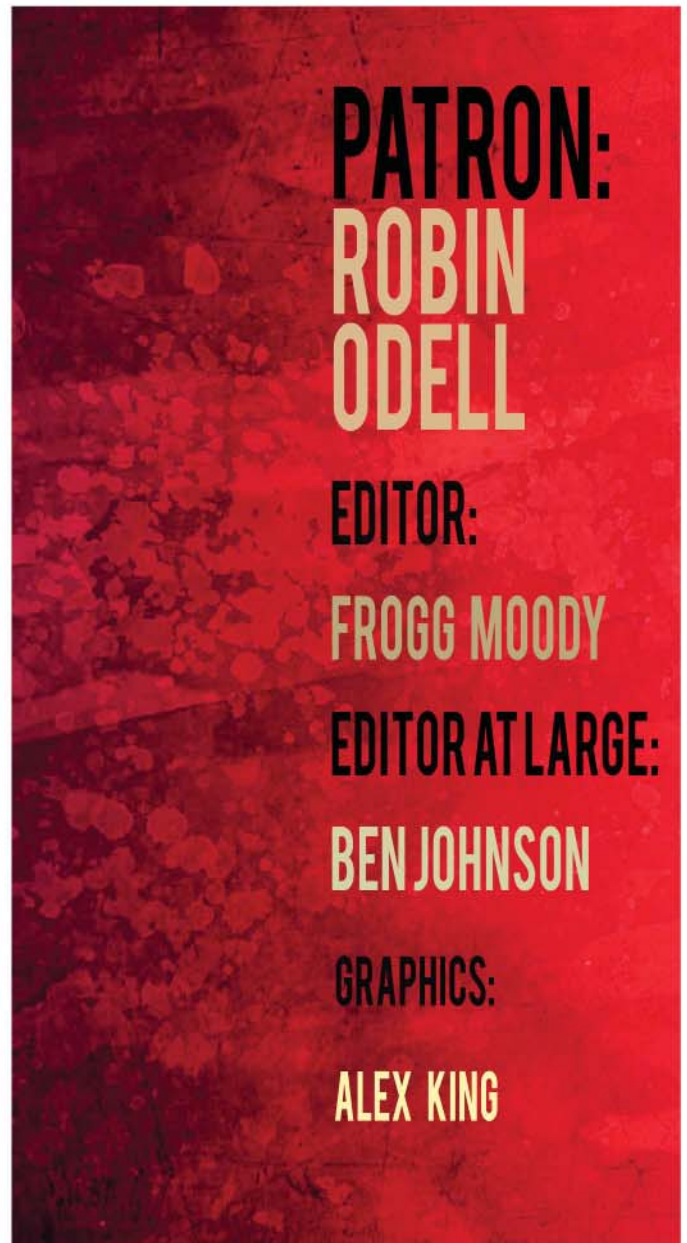


A 'Cold Case' is a Police term that describes a case that has not been fully solved and is not subject to any ongoing investigation; but which from re-examined archives, retained material evidence or indeed fresh evidence from new technologies, can reawaken interest and bring the suspects to justice.

This raises the question of '*how does Society determine Justice?*' The choice of featuring the Harry Roberts case as our lead article focuses attention on issues raised by the case that are still relevant in today's society. The murder of police officers in the line of duty still send shock-waves through communities. Because of this, the release of Harry Roberts became the focus of media attention, and his violent actions remain a hot topic for those who believe in the reinstatement of the death penalty.

Harry Roberts escaped the hangman's noose twice during his criminal career: The first occasion was by just a matter of hours, as his victim clung on to life for just long enough for the charge to be reduced from murder to manslaughter.

On the second occasion, the death penalty



**PATRON:**  
**ROBIN  
ODELL**

**EDITOR:**

**FROGG MOODY**

**EDITOR AT LARGE:**

**BEN JOHNSON**

**GRAPHICS:**

**ALEX KING**

had been suspended the year before the three policemen were shot whilst on duty.

It is due to the 1965 Abolition of Death Penalty act that Roberts is still alive and can be considered for parole.

The parole board will maintain that Roberts '*is no longer a threat to society*'. It would seem then, that the perception of '*whether a killer remains a threat to society*' is the key factor in their being considered for release. We might therefore wonder whether Ian Brady would also have been party to the same logic, if he had not been hospitalised due to his long-standing mental illness.

Like Brady, Roberts has never expressed any remorse for his crimes. He says that he was always a criminal, and seems to take pride in this fact.

So what does Society do with people like Harry Roberts? That is the real question behind his story. The reintroduction of the death penalty should never happen; society has come too far to regress back to the gallows. As Albert Pierrepoint is quoted as saying, "all the men and women that I have faced at that final moment, convince me that in what I have done, I have not prevented a single murder". If the death penalty is not a deterrent, then what is it? Although it is understandable that some of those directly affected by violent crime may recall Ruth Ellis saying, "*a life for a life*".

So that leaves us with the idea of a life sentence, when life really means life. There are already a number of prisoners currently serving whole life sentences, including Dennis Nilsen, Rose West and Arthur Hutchinson. But are these notorious killers further up the scale of depravity than Roberts?

It is important to compare the crimes of criminals. With Harry Roberts, rather than plotting sadistic murders and re-enacting the crime again and again, it can be argued that the crimes of were committed in the space of a few terrible moments, where the choice was capture or murder.

Having exhausted the options, the question of how to punish someone like Harry Roberts still remains unanswered. Everyone will have their own opinion, so how would you answer the question of how to deal with a man like Harry Roberts?

Linda Stratmann has reworked 'The Peasenhall Mystery', to show us the difficulty in securing a conviction. Did the accused commit the crime? It is certain that modern day forensics would have helped solve this dilemma, but as with the Oscar Pistorius case, was it murder or manslaughter? Then there is the matter of if high profile persons within the community are treated differently

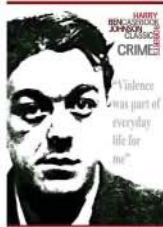
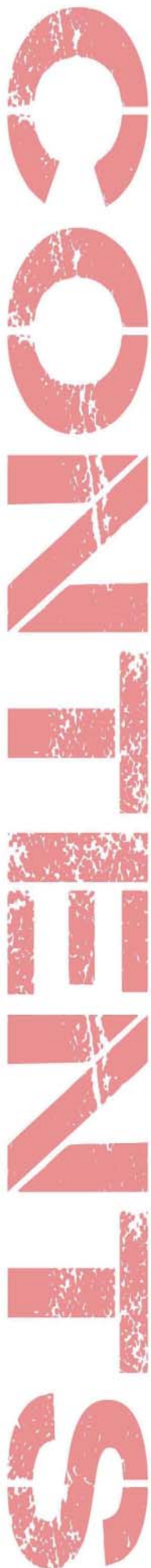
from others. What if Gardiner had not been a preacher and a family man? If he had been an innocent recluse would the Jury have been quick to convict him?

Sue Parry discovers that she is related to the victim of a notorious murder, but are the witnesses telling the truth? The murderer may have confessed, but there are other parties that seem to know too much and could have ulterior motives. This raises the question of 'when do we choose to believe the witness'?

With Fatty Arbuckle the '*witness*' was described by the defence as '*the witness that never saw*' and clearly there were ulterior motives to her claims, but was this the whole story? Was the victim murdered, not by some dramatic action, but by simply preventing the necessary medical care? Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle was innocent, by the third Trial that had become beyond doubt and his is a story of how the powerful seek to destroy those they consider a threat to their business interests. As Phillip Marlowe in Raymond Chandler's 'The Long Goodbye' says: "*the difference between crime and business is that for business you gotta have capital. Sometimes I think it's the only difference*".

The Times reported in 1879 that, '*no criminal case had created such excitement as that of Charles Peace, since Muller murdered Mr. Briggs on the North London Railway and the poisonings of William Palmer*'. We have therefore chosen to conclude this issue with an interview with Kate Colquhoun, author of the riveting 'Mr Briggs's Hat' and the story of Charlie Peace – bringing together an association of cases first started in 1879.

The Casebook: Classic Crime Conference 2015 is concerned with 'Miscarriages of Justice' and we hope that you will join us there.



## 'FOUL PLAY, FELONY AND FAME' - BY BEN JOHNSON

Editor, Ben Johnson looks at the crimes of cop killer Harry Roberts who has recently been released after 45 years in prison.



## 'THE PEASEHALL MURDER' - BY LINDA STRATMANN

In 1902 William Gardiner murdered Rose Harsent - or did he?



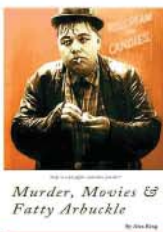
## 'THE CASEBOOK: CLASSIC CRIME SURVEY' BY FROGG MOODY

Top ten cases that captured the public imagination.



## :'WILLIAM CORDER & THE RED BARN' - BY SUE PARRY

The infamous Victorian murder is brought vividly to life in this new examination of the facts by crime Author Sue Parry.



## 'MURDER, MOVIES & FATTY ARBUCKLE' - BY ALEX KING

Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle was the most famous comedian in the world earning more in a year than most people would in their entire lifetime. Then he was framed for murder, but by who and for what reason?



## NOTICE BOARD

Letters, messages and things of interest



## CONTRIBUTORS

01-03-2015

Dear Sir,

### An Open Letter regarding a posthumous pardon for Ruth Ellis

Ruth Ellis was the last woman to be hung in England, she was 28. The date was 13 July 1955 - 60 years ago this July. Should Ruth Ellis have hung? We are of the opinion that she should not although we are well aware that the decision at that time was well within the law of the land.

It has been said that Ruth Ellis virtually put the noose around her own neck when she admitted shooting her lover David Blakely (she fired five shots at him) but many of the events were held back from the jury - would the outcome have been different had the full facts been known to them?

It is interesting to note that another woman (Mrs. Sarah Lloyd) who murdered her neighbour with a shovel, was reprieved the week before Ruth Ellis was hung. Lloyd served just 7 years of her life sentence. There were also other cases of the death sentence being commuted to life imprisonment that same year. How much stereotyping should we read into Ruth's fate, that here was a swanky, platinum blond standing in the dock.....?

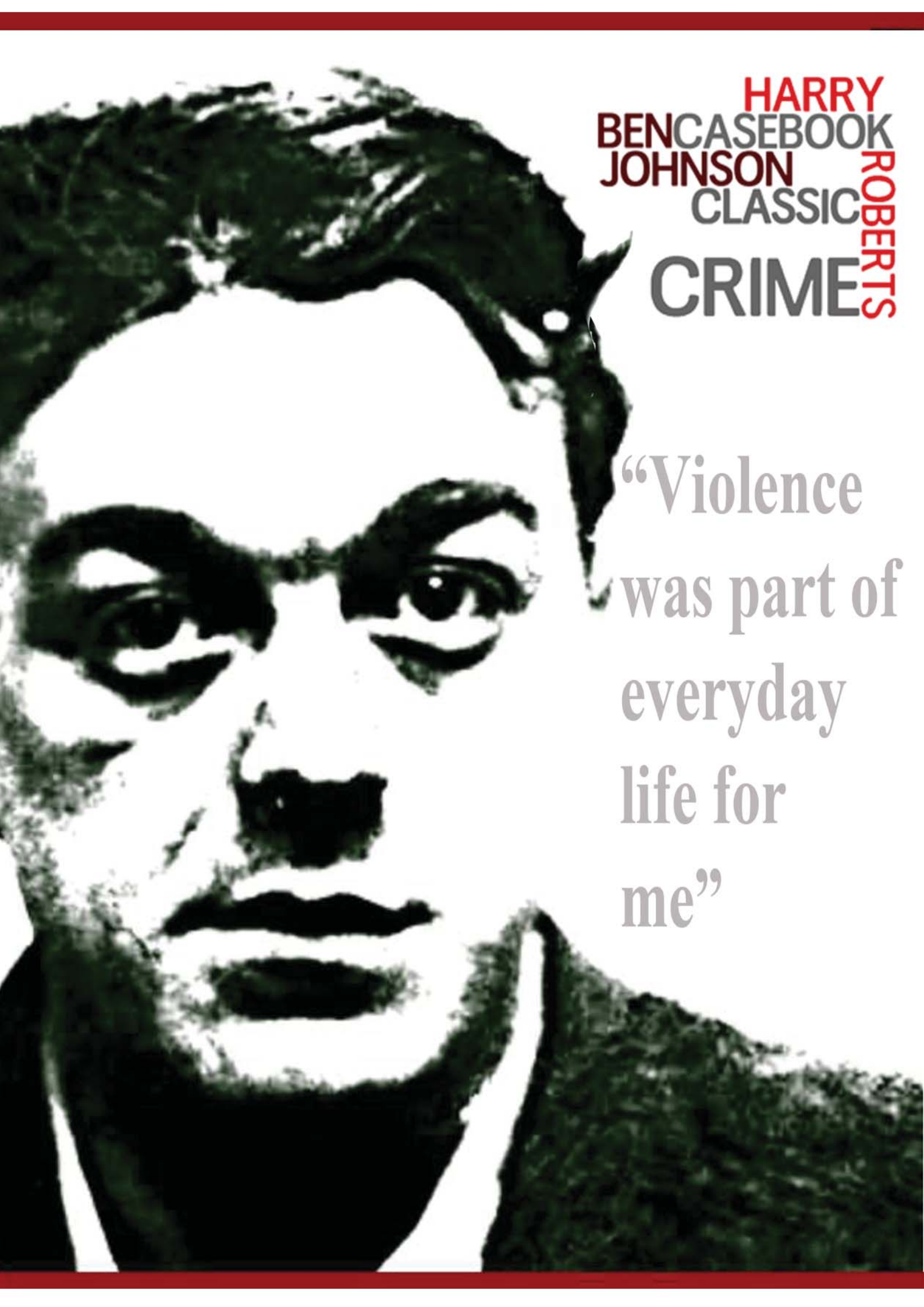
There is no doubt that David Blakely treated Ruth Ellis appallingly using continual physical and emotional violence to an already traumatised woman. In 1955, 'Battered Woman Syndrome' was unknown so what conclusion would the jury have come to had these facts been presented to them - manslaughter or diminished responsibility perhaps? Also, the fact that Ruth had suffered a miscarriage not long before the shooting due to a blow from Blakely was something that the jury were unaware of.

Then we come to the night of the event. It is now known that the gun Ruth used was owned by Desmond Cussen, a man who was infatuated with her and jealous of her love for Blakely. There is plenty to suggest that Cussen had taught Ruth how to fire the gun and actually drove her near to the scene of the crime. Had the police investigation been more thorough, Desmond Cussen might have been considered an accomplice and Ellis might not have stood trial alone. Ruth was an emotional wreck that night and with Blakely refusing to see or talk to her, she was further pushed to the brink of despair. We believe that although the law of the land was technically correct in 1955, the effects of 'Battered Woman Syndrome' were unknown at the time and the other acts of brutality against Ellis were withheld from the jury - Ruth murdered a man, but was a victim of domestic violence. In view of these facts, we believe the decision should be re-addressed. With the evidence unheard by the Jury, it should be re-considered as a 'crime passionnel'. We believe Ruth Ellis should be given a posthumous pardon on this basis.

After shooting Blakely, Ruth Ellis did not run from the scene of the crime or resist arrest from an off-duty policeman and it was stated that Ruth seemed to be in a daze. She was hung by Albert Pierrepoint who stated that Ruth Ellis faced the rope with a dignity and calmness not shown by many hardened criminals who had faced the same fate. It seems that from the moment she had fired the gun, Ruth Ellis had decided that life without Blakely was not worth living.

We hope with the disclosed evidence and consideration for her psychological state that Ruth Ellis can now be granted a posthumous pardon.

Yours sincerely



HARRY  
BENCASEBOOK  
JOHNSON  
CLASSIC  
CRIME ROBERTS

“Violence  
was part of  
everyday  
life for  
me”

## Harry Roberts: Foul-play, Felony, and Fame

It had been a mere fortnight since Geoff Hurst had sealed England's World cup victory, but his mantle as England's most famous man was about to be stolen, along with the lives of the three policemen who had casually parked near the battered old van in close proximity to London's Wormwood Scrubs prison.

The three occupants of the van tensed as the police approached, and the man in the passenger seat reached for a bag beneath the seat. Like Geoff Hurst, he was also to become famous. He would be the subject of chanting from the football terraces, and his image would adorn the front pages of every newspaper.

However, this man would not be celebrated for his talent and sportsmanship, he would be despised by the majority of the British public, yet idolised by an anti-establishment faction of disillusioned youth. His next move would signal the end of three lives, and the beginning of Britain's biggest manhunt.

Almost half a century on, his gnarled, grimacing expression, and emotionless, shark-like eyes once more adorn the front pages of the nation's newspapers. For the first time since that dreadful, and fateful, day in 1966, he is free to walk the streets again.

Born in 1936 to a working-class family in pre-war Wanstead, Essex, Harry Roberts was no stranger to the criminal side of society. Even as a small child he was indoctrinated by his mother into a life of scams and black-market profiteering.

His life of crime was to start in a small way, similar to those of many a young urchin as the country slid into war, and fathers disappeared to faraway places in order to fight the enemy. This situation was to create a generation of children who would be left unattended by struggling mothers, and forced to mature before their time.

In war, there is always a quick buck to be made, and Harry's mother seems to have supplemented her income with a little extra cash in the way of ill-gotten gains. There is no doubt that many other households boosted their coffers in this way, but this is where Roberts' criminal mind seems to have been nurtured.

In a 2008 interview with author and journalist Nick Davies, Roberts claimed that his mother was "selling on mostly food, tea and sugar, and sometimes ration books. Anything she could get her hands on."

**"I'm a criminal...all my life I've been involved in criminal things."**



*"I was a professional criminal. I didn't react the same way as ordinary people."*

Little is known of his formative years, except that his parents ran a public house, and just like in those austere wartime years, the family were never far away from a scam or an unattended goods lorry. Many a bargain could be picked up in the smoky tap room of The George pub.

It would appear that the transformation from cheeky scamp to violent criminal occurred during Roberts' late teens, as at the age of eighteen, he was to get his first taste of institution life, after a shocking attack which took place during the robbery of a local shop.

Brutally beating the shopkeeper with an iron bar when he tried to protect his livelihood, Roberts now began to show the horrifyingly violent traits of the man he was destined to become. He had joined the big time crooks, and the police would no longer see him off with a clip around the ear.

He was sentenced to 19 months in Gaynes Hall Borstal, and even upon his release, his freedom was to last just a couple of weeks, as once again, he was institutionalized, but this time by the Ministry of Defence, as he was called up to undertake his compulsory National Service.

The "Call Up" altered many lives, some for the better, as criminal types were shown a life of discipline and were taught trades which would help them to progress

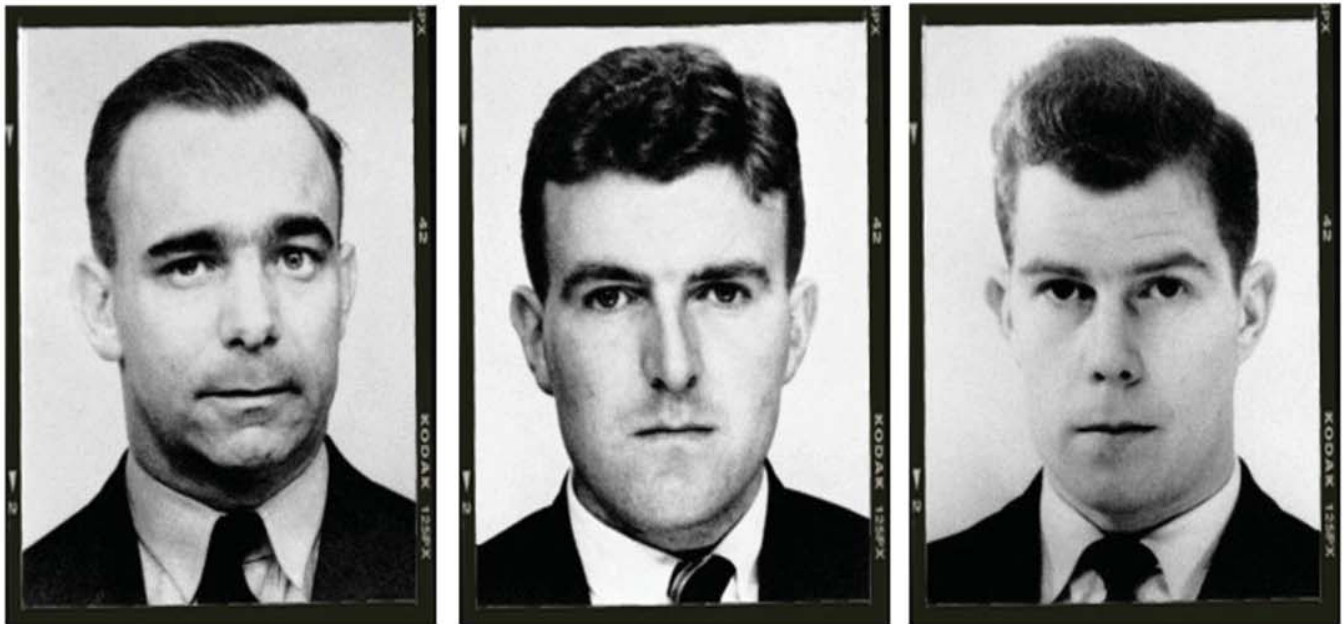
beyond the army, but in a few cases, Roberts' being one, the freedom to inflict revenge on the world, and the availability of deadly weapons merely propelled some young men further into a life of violence.

Roberts was to see action in two volatile parts of the world during his service in the Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own), firstly he was sent to Kenya along with thousands of other conscripts, to crush the Mau Mau uprising which threatened British colonial rule in that part of Africa. He has never had much to say about his time in Kenya, but it is probable that his "greenness" as a new recruit meant that he shied away from trouble, and instead began to learn the skills that would aid him in the near future.

As the uprising was halted, and troops were withdrawn from Kenya, Roberts still had time to serve, and was relocated even further afield, to the jungles of British Colonial Malaya to take part in the efforts to quash the Communist insurgency. It was in this inhospitable part of the world that Roberts claims to have become a killer (*albeit with the blessing of the Commonwealth*) having "*personally killed at least four*" of the enemy. Roberts also claims to have been promoted to the rank of Sergeant during this time, but other sources list him as a Lance Corporal.

Former prison acquaintance turned journalist, John





*They keep asking me 'Do you feel remorse, Harry?' And I say no."*

McVicar claims that Roberts frequently boasted about his killings in Malaya during his many years in prison. These accounts are unproven, but there can be no doubt that young Harry was to leave the army a trained and effective soldier, who was now desensitized to death and remorse.

Now confident in his strength and ability, yet lacking the adrenaline rush of being a front-line soldier, Roberts returned to his pre-service ways, and embarked upon a series of violent robberies. Post Offices, Bookmakers and Pawnbrokers were his choice of target, but he and his accomplices were also not averse to breaking into the homes of the vulnerable.

In 1960, along with an accomplice, Roberts gained entry to the home of an old man disguised as a Tax Inspector. During the ensuing robbery, the elderly victim was beaten around the head with a glass decanter, he was never to recover from his injuries.

However, as the victim held onto life for a year and three days after the attack, Roberts and his accomplice were never charged with murder, as the death would have to have taken place within a year and a day.

So, by 48 hours, Roberts had escaped the Hangman's noose, and was summarily convicted of robbery and assault. This was much to the dissatisfaction of the

Judge, who, bound by red tape, told Roberts "*You are a brutal thug. You came very near the rope this time.*" Had the elderly victims struggle to cling onto life ended just two days earlier, Roberts and his accomplice would now be buried in the precincts of a prison, and the three policemen would not have been murdered.

Having escaped the noose, Roberts was free again five years later. The period of incarceration had done nothing to calm his criminal intent and within weeks, he was planning the biggest robbery of his career. Along with two accomplices, John Witney and John Duddy, Roberts had decided to rob a bank and it was with exactly this in mind that they parked their Standard Vanguard Estate van on Braybrook Street in order to scout the area for a car to steal and use during the robbery.

A bag containing a Luger, a Webley service revolver, and another unnamed firearm lay beneath the seat. The mood was tense, and an unmarked Triumph 2000 that parked near to them immediately raised alarm bells. After a few seconds of scrutiny by the occupants of the car, Roberts felt threatened enough to slide his hand into the bag, and take hold of the Luger.

The three men in the car were plain clothes policemen. They were suspicious of any vehicle parking so close to the precincts of Wormwood Scrubs, as several escape

# Daily Mirror MASSACRED

44 Saturday, August 12, 1966 No. 78,082

## IN THE LINE OF DUTY



After the massacre... one detective lies dead in the road while a policeman pulls up a screen to hide the scene of the killings. In front of him is the Triumph 2000 Q-car under which one just seen the head of another dead detective. The third detective was shot dead in the car.

### 18,000 JOIN HUNT FOR KILLERS OF 3 POLICEMEN

Two dead detectives lie in a street... symbols of the worst crime London has known this century. More than 18,000 people joined a hunt for the killers of three policemen who were murdered in the line of duty. The search for the killers of three policemen who were murdered in the line of duty. The search for the killers of three policemen who were murdered in the line of duty. The search for the killers of three policemen who were murdered in the line of duty.

Story: Mirror Crime Squad Pictures: Mirror cameramen

# 3 POLICEMEN SHOT DEAD NEAR SCRUBS

## Q-car crew murdered

Three police officers were shot dead in Raybush Street, Shepherd's Bush, and a Triumph 2000 Q-car was used as a hide-out for the killers. The shooting happened after a Standard squad car containing four men had been looted along Raybush Street by the police in a burglary raid. Thought to have been taken, handcuffed and shot, a police van at an address here today.

## SHATTERED WINDSCREEN

The shattering windscreen of a police Q-car was seen today by a witness who said it was a sign of the violence that had taken place. The witness said that he saw the windscreen being pulled up by a policeman to hide the scene of the crime. The witness said that he saw the windscreen being pulled up by a policeman to hide the scene of the crime.

## ENGLISH GIRLS IN ROW AT GAMES

KINGSTON, Jamaica, Friday. New a rumour at the Commonwealth Games, with three England girls in the middle of it. It all began when Janet Stanger collapsed on the National Stadium after finishing in the women's 200 yards race. They were the first of the girls to get the news and the rest of the team in a matter of minutes. The girls were in a state of shock and the news was a great disappointment to them. The girls were in a state of shock and the news was a great disappointment to them.

**THE OTHER NEWS**

**ENGLAND'S 27 GOLDS**

**THE MEDALS**

**INTERNATIONAL**

**CITY**

**Business Table**

**Kee wash white nylon**

It will give white nylon even faster than ever up white new colour money

**NEW kee**

WASHING MACHINE

attempts had been made in recent months. It is also possible that at least one of the policemen recognized at least one of the van's occupants.

Two of the policemen, DS Head and DC Wombwell got out of the car and walked casually towards the van. Upon reaching the driver's window, they began to question Witney about the lack of a tax disc. A discussion followed, and as Witney desperately pleaded ignorance, and made promises of rectifying the missing tax disc in order to placate the policemen and diffuse the situation, the pressure of scrutiny was too much for Harry Roberts. Without warning, Roberts raised the Luger and shot DC Wombwell through the left eye, killing him instantly. DS Head immediately fled towards the unmarked car, but Roberts knew that he could not let him escape, and fired two more shots, the second piercing the fleeing policeman's skull.

As this was taking place, the back seat passenger of the van, John Duddy had made a grab for the Webley service revolver, and ran towards the Triumph, the driver, PC Fox was desperately reversing towards

them by this time, yet Duddy managed to fire three shots through the car window.

Duddy was joined by Roberts, who fired several more shots into the car. PC Fox was hit, and as he died, in a macabre twist, his foot jolted on the accelerator, and the car rolled over the body of DS Head who lay dying from his wounds.

John Witney had remained in the driver's seat, and Roberts and Duddy rapidly got back into the van before the three of them drove away in a cacophony of screeching tyres. This was the mistake that was to lead the police to the gang, as a passer-by, alerted by the haste of the van so close to the prison, wrote down the registration number, PGT 726.

Having never fired a shot, Witney, rather naively, returned home, and was arrested six hours later when it was discovered that the van was registered to him. After a brief period of pretence in which he claimed to have sold the van to "a man in a pub" earlier that day, Witney caved and named his accomplices.

By this time, the two shooters had fled. Duddy was

Daily Mirror

Midnight-Yard issue picture

# THIS IS HARRY ROBERTS



IF YOU SEE HIM TELL THE POLICE

**HE IS ARMED**

**HE IS DANGEROUS**

METROPOLITAN POLICE

# £1,000 REWARD

# MURDER



A reward or rewards up to a total of £1,000 will be paid for information leading to the arrest of HARRY MAURICE ROBERTS, b. Wanstead, Essex, on 21-7-36, 5ft. 10in., photo. above, wanted for questioning in connection with the murder of three police officers on the 12th August, 1966, at Braybrook Street, Shepherds Bush.

Information to be given to New Scotland Yard, S.W.1, or at any police station.

The amount of any payment will be in the discretion of the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis.

© Police Handout

J. SIMPSON,  
Commissioner of Police.

en route to his home town of Glasgow, and Roberts had chosen to flee into the wilderness. The two were now the most wanted men in the UK, and a reward of £1000 was immediately raised for their capture.

Encouraged by the Press, the gunning down of three innocent policemen had sent the nation into a frenzy of anger and grief. The faces of the two assailants were on the front page of every newspaper, and in thousands of shop windows and Duddy was to remain 'at large' for just five days before being turned in by his own brother. Either spurred on by sense of public duty, or tempted by the reward, Duddy's brother had passed on his whereabouts to the police.

This left only Roberts still on the run and his mother appeared on television to make a plea to her son to turn himself in.

*"I ask you from the bottom of my heart to come into the open and give yourself up, If you make an appointment with me, I will come with you. This whole thing is killing me. Please do as I ask before there's any more blood shed."*

Roberts, however, was a trained survivalist from his

time in Malaya. He knew that he could trust no-one, and headed into the heavily-wooded seclusion of Epping Forest. Using skills that his National Service had taught him, he managed to survive hidden in the forest for three months.

However, on November 15th, he was caught sleeping in a barn at Blount's Farm near Bishop's Stortford. A senior Hertfordshire Police officer said that Roberts had seemed grateful to only be arrested, he was genuinely expecting to be killed on the spot.

The trial of Witney and Duddy had actually already begun at the Old Bailey some weeks before Roberts' arrest, but was immediately adjourned so that the three perpetrators could be tried together.

*"The most heinous crime for a generation or more."*

The year of 1966 is, and always will be, remembered for England's World Cup victory. However, crime was big news in that particular year, with two huge trials taking place within months of each other at opposite ends of the country.



In April, the trial of Myra Hindley and Ian Brady took place at Chester Assizes, and was one of the most haunting and diabolical cases that the British public had ever experienced. The reaction was one of disbelief, and the nation began to feel that the age of innocence was beginning to pass.

The trial of Roberts, Duddy and Witney (*commonly known as the Shepherd's Bush Murders*) sparked just as much of a public reaction, however, the perception of their crimes was different. The Moors Murders were horrific and sickening, whereas the Shepherd's Bush Murders were senseless and heinous. The nation once again followed the events in the newspapers, keen to see justice being done. However, a majority of the public would not be satisfied in either case, as the Death Penalty had been abolished the previous year. This led to angry protests outside both courtrooms, and a nation baying for blood.

The public reaction to the Shepherd's Bush murders had been one of unilateral grief. The funeral procession of the three policemen was witnessed by thousands of mourners, and a huge amount of money was received in donations to the victims families, and the Metropolitan Police Bereavement Fund.

The three defendants were going to be made an example of with all of the legal power that still remained at the judge's disposal, but even still, Roberts had once again narrowly escaped the gallows.

Only Witney chose to plead his case during the trial, arguing that he hadn't fired a shot, and had only been an accomplice to the murders. He also claimed that

both he and Duddy were terrified of Harry Roberts, and feared for their lives had they not gone along with his plans.

Despite this, all three men were sentenced to life imprisonment, with a minimum sentence of thirty years. This was the harshest punishment that could be handed down, but still, the majority of the nation was not satisfied. Sentencing the three men, Mr Justice Glyn-Jones described their actions as "the most heinous crime for a generation or more" before sending them to their fate at separate prisons.

John Duddy died of ill health in Parkhurst Prison on 8th February, 1981. He was never considered for parole during his time in prison, as he hadn't even served half of his minimum sentence by the time of his death.

John Witney was released to public outcry in 1991. He was the first person to be released early on license after killing a police officer. One can argue that he never fired a fatal shot, but most would maintain that he was treated with unusual leniency by the England and Wales parole board, having not served his minimum sentence. His freedom was to be relatively short-lived however, as in 1999 he was himself brutally murdered, battered to death with a hammer by his heroin addicted flatmate. Police at the time discounted any link between his death and the crimes he had previously committed.



That just left Harry Roberts. He had certainly killed two of the three victims, and had fired shots at the third. For him, thirty years was simply the minimum sentence he could expect to serve, in all likelihood, the Home Office had already thrown away the key. It was therefore with great surprise to the nation, that in October 2014, Roberts was granted parole, and would be freed on license at a later date. After serving 48 years at Her Majesty's Pleasure, it was decided that, at the age of 78, Harry Roberts no longer poses a threat to the public.

Despite serving almost half a century in prison, Roberts has never been forgotten or allowed to sink quietly into the background. His life and crimes have been well documented, and he became something of an anti-hero to many people with a grudge against the police.

His name was frequently chanted on the football terraces during the sixties and seventies, mainly by hooligan factions of London clubs. These simple, almost nursery rhyme-like, songs could be heard at Millwall, West Ham and Chelsea matches, among several others;

*"Harry Roberts is our friend, is our friend, is our friend. Harry Roberts is our friend, he kills coppers."*

And;

*"Harry Roberts, he's our man, he shoots policemen, bang, bang, bang."*

These chants were used solely to antagonise the police who patrolled the matches, and have thankfully been allowed to die out by the mainstream of supporters since the decline of hooliganism. But, just like England hero Geoff Hurst, this Essex hardman managed to leave his mark on both 1966, the football terraces, and the consciousness of the nation as a whole. In Nick Davies' 1993 interview, the author states that Roberts *"chuckles like an indulgent father at the mention of this."*

Although the lifestyle of this notorious sixties gangster is one of fascination to many, it is worth noting that, despite his age and frailty, Harry Roberts still has no remorse for his actions. His views on the crimes he committed may have softened over the last few years,

and could have been a factor in his successful parole hearing, but his outlook still remained as black and white as ever during his last major interview (with Nick Davies, 1993). *"The police aren't real people to us. They're strangers, they're the enemy. And you don't feel remorse for killing a stranger."*

What determines if a murderer is likely to be granted freedom? Recently, triple murderer Arthur Hutchinson lost an appeal against his whole life sentence. So how does this differ to the case of Harry Roberts? Like Roberts, Hutchinson killed three people on one fateful day, as well as committing rape on a teenage girl. He also fled, leading to a costly and frantic police manhunt. The similarities of the crime would lead most to think that the punishment should also be similar.

However, as Roberts now enjoys a pint in a pub, and a game of ten pin bowling, Hutchinson was returned to his cell in HMP Wakefield. One could argue that Hutchinson's crimes were completely unprovoked and committed during an attempted burglary. He had sat and watched his victims all day before entering their home and carrying out his crimes.

Roberts was also planning a robbery, but can we say that his attack was unprovoked? Yes, he shot three unarmed policemen. But had those policemen not been there at the time, and not approached the car, would Roberts have spent half a decade behind bars for a triple murder?

It would appear that the mitigating factor for Roberts was a lack of premeditation. He feared for his freedom, there was a gun within reach, and he made a split-second decision. Many of those serving life sentences made conscious decisions to kill, and kill again. For Roberts, there was no time to reflect on the consequences, it was a fight or flight reaction, and he was cornered.

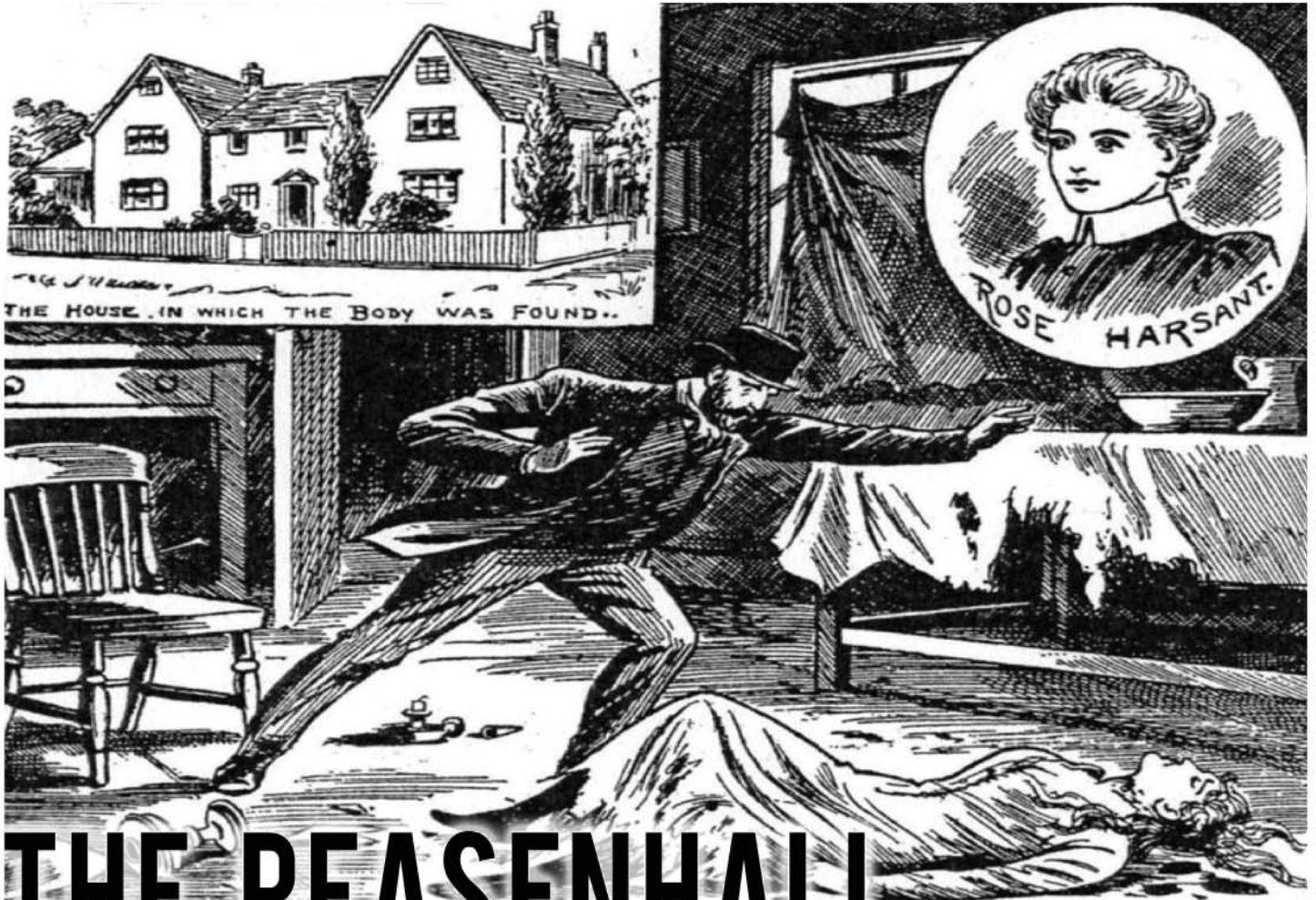
Whether Roberts should have been released will always be a grey area, but cases such as this only serve to prove that not all crimes can be judged in the same way. Not that this will bring any comfort to the families of three policemen killed in the line of duty.

+ Window of Rose's bedroom

The Peasenhall Murder by Linda Stratmann. Images courtesy of Stewart P. Evans



The Peasenhall victims home and murder scene



# THE PEASENHALL MURDER

LINDA STRATMANN

Shortly after 8am on the morning of Sunday 1 June 1902, William Harsent a 62 year old agricultural labourer of the tiny village of Peasenhall in Suffolk, made his weekly visit to Providence House, where his daughter, 23 year old Rose worked as a domestic servant. Providence House a substantial 17th century property had been divided into three dwellings, one of which was occupied by Rose's employers, elderly tailor William Crisp and his wife Georgiana. Harsent was taking clean linen to his daughter and must have expected to see her at work in the ground floor kitchen. Unusually, the door of the small conservatory that surrounded the entrance to the kitchen was open, and the kitchen door was ajar. The kitchen was in darkness, but as he pushed open the door the morning light flooded in, revealing a terrible sight. Rose was lying face up at the bottom of the narrow staircase that led to her attic bedroom, her head in a pool of blood. She had been wearing a nightgown, but a fire had almost burned away the fabric, and there was a strong smell of paraffin and charred flesh. Harsent touched his daughter's arm, but she was quite cold, she had obviously been dead for some hours. Covering her almost naked body with a rug, he went for help.



WILLIAM GARDINER



ROSE HARSENT

Dr. Lay, who lived across the road, was called to the scene, and he was soon followed by the local constable, PC Eli Nunn. The reason why the kitchen was so dark soon became apparent – a thick shawl had been hung across the window. It was clear to Dr. Lay that the fire had nothing to do with Rose's death – she had been dead before it was lit. The cause of death was loss of blood from two cuts on her throat, either of which would have been fatal, and there was also a deep stab wound in the chest, some bruises on her face, and smaller cuts on her hands. Lay also believed that Rose had been engaged in sexual activity shortly before her death. There was another complicating factor. Rose Harsent was six months pregnant. A careful search revealed no weapon that could have caused the injuries, but despite this, Dr Lay's initial reaction was that Rose had committed suicide. She had been denying her increasingly obvious condition to both her family and her employers for the last few weeks, and had once said she would throw herself in the pond if she ever got in the family way.

Under Rose's head neck and shoulders was a copy of the previous Friday's East Anglian Daily Times. Beside her lay the candlestick she used to light herself to bed, the candle almost burned down, and parts of the kitchen oil lamp, which appeared to have been dismantled as if someone had tried unsuccessfully to get at the contents. The glass shade was unbroken. The blood was only on the left side of her body and there was no trace of any footprints in it. Near her head were the smashed remains of a 6 ounce medicine bottle, smelling strongly of paraffin. The cork had been so tightly inserted it was impossible to remove. Sticking to the glass was a small fragment of blue cloth. Part of a blood and paraffin soaked label still stuck to the bottle. The writing on it was illegible, but Dr. Lay recognised the bottle as a type he carried in his own stock, and thought it might be one he had used to supply medicine to the sister of a Mrs Georgianna Gardiner who lived at nearby Alma Cottage.

Nunn and Lay made a careful search of Rose's bedroom. Rose's bed had not been slept in though a depression on its surface showed that she had sat on it for while. Near the bed was an envelope with a local postmark, containing an unsigned letter, and this made it clear exactly what Rose had been waiting for.





D R

I will try to see you tonight  
 At 12 o'clock at your Place if you  
 Put a light in your window at  
 10 o'clock for about 10 minutes then  
 you can take it out again.  
 Don't have a light in your Room at  
 12 as I will come round to the  
 back

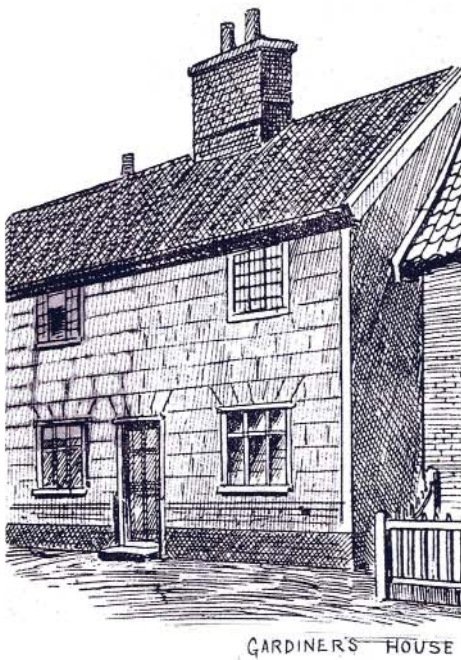
So Rose had been expecting a visitor, possibly a lover, and the shawl which belonged to Mrs Crisp, and was normally kept in a box in another part of the house had been deliberately pinned across the window to shut out prying eyes.

There was a bundle of letters in Rose's drawer, mostly from family, but some were unsigned love letters with contents of a shockingly intimate nature, in a hand different from that of the assignation note. There were also two signed letters from Georgianna Gardiner's husband William, in which he discussed a scandal which had erupted a year previously involving himself and Rose, which he declared to be the result of false accusations. The handwriting of these letters bore a strong similarity to that of the assignation note.

William Gardiner was a successful man who

had risen from humble beginnings. Illegitimate and born in a workhouse in 1866, he had a talent for woodworking, and soon became a skilled wheelwright. He married Georgianna Cady at Westleton primitive Methodist chapel in 1888, just two months before the birth of their first child. The couple moved to Peasenhall, where he soon found employment at Smyths' Seed Drill works. Although much of the area around Peasenhall is farming country the factory was an important employer in the village. The quality of Gardiner's work ensured that before long he was appointed senior foreman. He also took an active role in the Methodist Church. By 1900 when he was made assistant steward of the chapel at nearby Sibton, Gardiner was a pillar of respectability in the district - a valued skilled senior workman, and a man of some influence in the local religious community, who played the chapel harmonium. He was also a physically impressive figure, with a strong, stocky build, dark hair and a thick black beard. The local children certainly found him an intimidating figure, but his blunt masculinity must have given him an appeal to a susceptible young woman.

Rose Harsent was born in Peasenhall, and from around 1898 she began attending the Primitive Methodist chapel in Sibton. Rose was not noted for her piety, and the main reason may have been local ploughboy Bob Kerridge who lived near Rose and attended chapel regularly.



GARDINER'S HOUSE

There was an understanding between them which had proceeded far enough that they regarded themselves as engaged, although the attraction seems to have been mostly on his side. Rose, who on the evidence of photographs was not a great beauty, though with a neat figure and a cheery smile, may well have been flattered by Kerridge's devotion, and was happy to encourage him if nothing better was available. He and Rose went to chapel together. Rose had musical interests, and enjoyed the choir. She hinted to Bob that she would like to learn to play the harmonium, and he managed somehow to find enough money to buy her one.

Rose might well have gone on to marry Bob but in 1900 she left home and went to work for Mr and Mrs Crisp at Providence House, and there she became better acquainted with Frederick Davies. Fred was an impressionable youth some four years younger than Rose. He saw her at chapel, and worked at Emmets general store in the street, making grocery deliveries to Providence House, where he had better opportunity of engaging her in conversation. Fred had what might nowadays be considered a normal teenage interest in sex, but in an era when even talking about it was discouraged. Fred began to send Rose openly romantic letters full of quivering desire, accompanied by lewd poems and some of the more explicit passages of the Bible. It was clear that Fred hoped that one day he would be rewarded by a physical relationship, and in anticipation of this happy time, gave Rose a medical manual, which included information on contraception and abortion. His letters suggest only an unrequited passion, so it seems that Rose was content to keep the frustrated youth at arm's length.



WILLIAM HARSENT AT ROSES GRAVE

On 1 May 1901 with Georgianna Gardiner just two days from the birth of her seventh child (Daisy, who lived only a month) two young men, 20 year old Bill Wright, and 26 year old Alfonso Skinner, both of whom worked at the factory, started to tell a scandalous story which spread rapidly through the village. Wright had been outside a small building known locally as the Doctor's Chapel, when he had seen Rose enter the narrow alley leading to its door. Some while later he saw Gardiner enter the same alley.

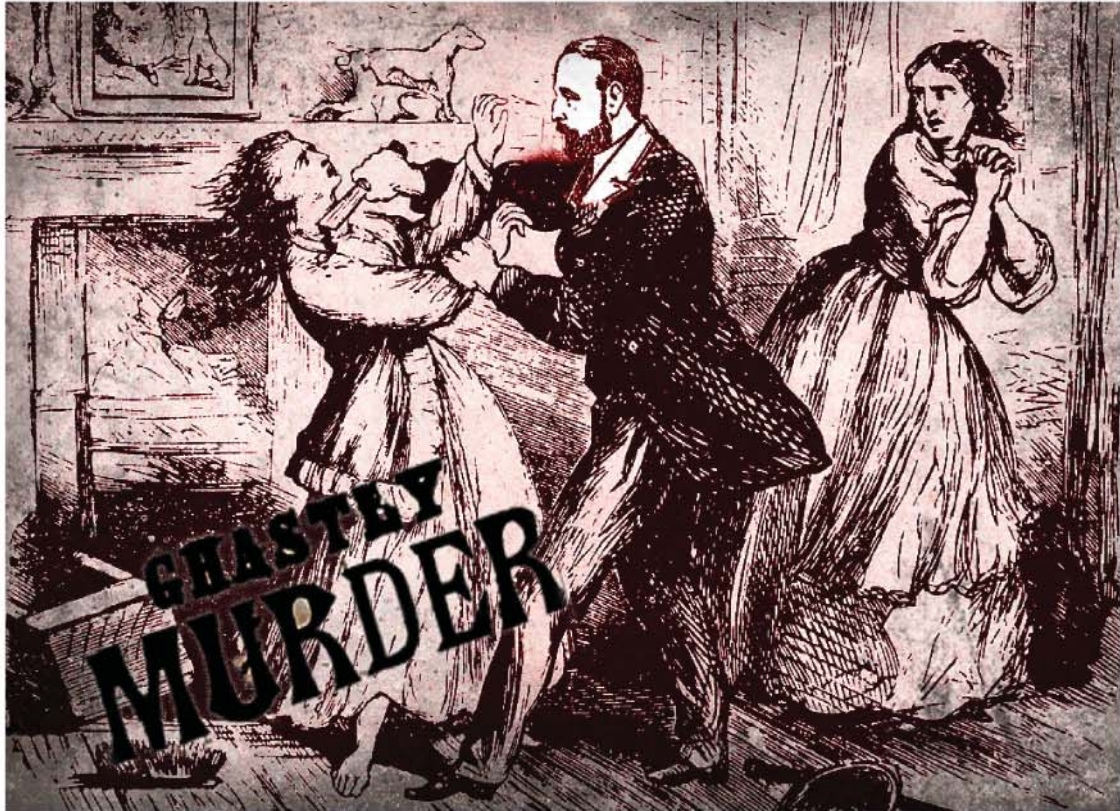


With his suspicions thoroughly aroused, he decided to get another witness, and alerted Skinner. They sneaked around the back of the chapel and tried to look into the window but it was too dark to see what was happening. From within, however, they heard talking, laughing and some rustling noises followed by a conversation. They recognised the voices as those of Gardiner and Rose, and the comments left them in no doubt that the two were having an affair. Soon, Rose left the chapel and hurried home and shortly afterwards Gardiner too left the building. Neither was aware that their secret was out.

As soon as Gardiner heard about the gossip that was spreading through the village, he wrote a letter to Rose robustly defending his reputation, and stating that he would summons Wright and Skinner for defamation of character unless they withdrew their statement and made a written apology. Gardiner also confronted the two young men directly, accusing them of lying, and threatening them with legal action. They were unmoved, and

stuck to their story.

Gardiner decided that the only thing to do was submit the matter to an open enquiry before the members of the chapel. The enquiry was held at Sibton Chapel on 11 May 1901. The community regarded the matter as sufficiently important to call in Reverend John Guy, superintendent minister of the circuit to chair the meeting. Wright and Skinner were questioned, and maintained their story, and then the matter was debated. In the absence of any proof either way, it was the word of two chapel members against two non-members. It was finally concluded that Gardiner was innocent of the charges, and indeed it seemed that those members of the congregation who attended genuinely believed that the accusations were a pack of lies. No-one offered any suggestions as to why Wright and Skinner should have invented such a scurrilous tale. The rest of the village, however, was divided as to whether or not the allegations were true. For Rose, life went on much as before, with one exception. The scandal meant the end of



her relationship with Bob Kerridge. This seems not to have caused her any distress, since when she was asked about it she said 'Oh he's too quiet for me. He never has anything to say. I like a man who's got some life in him.'

The night of Rose's murder had been a memorable one in Peasenhall. At 10 pm the inhabitants had been watching the skies with some anxiety. The previous night there had been a thunderstorm with torrential rain, a serious matter, since the narrow brook which ran the length of the main thoroughfare known as The Street, was easily flooded. Peering nervously from their doorsteps, they saw distant flashes of lightening illuminating threatening dark clouds only a few miles away, and knew that they were in for another stormy night. William Gardiner, too, was standing on his doorstep, and across the road at 10pm a light shone in the window of Rose Harsent's bedroom. It was clearly visible from where he stood.

At Providence House, some two hundred yards down the road, William Crisp and his wife

had retired to bed at 10.15 but during the night, the crashing of the storm awoke them. Unlike Rose's attic room, their bedroom was connected to the ground floor by the main staircase, and they went down to check that all was well. Mrs. Crisp glanced into the kitchen and noticed that it was unusually dark, but she didn't think to check why this was. The couple returned to bed and slept but some time later, with the storm still raging above, they were again awoken by what seemed to be a scream and a thud. They discussed whether they should go to see if Rose was all right but decided against it and went back to sleep. The time of this crucial event is unknown, and Mrs. Crisp later made guesses and retracted them. The only thing known for certain is that it must have been before half past one in the morning, because that is when the storm finally died out.

When Gardiner was informed of Rose's death the next morning he seemed curiously unmoved despite the fact that he had known her for seven or eight years.



Questioned by the police, both Gardiners said that they had gone to see Mrs Dickinson together at about 11 p. m. and stayed there until half past one, a visit which gave both of them an impeccable alibi. Shown the assignation note and its envelope, both denied that it was in William Gardiner's handwriting. Georgianna, asked about the medicine bottle for her sister, recalled it, and searched, but was unable to find it. She did suggest that she had given Rose some camphorated oil for a sore throat some months previously and it might have been in that bottle.

On 3 June the inquest was opened briefly and adjourned, the coroner pointing out that the nature of the wounds and the assignation note did not support the initial assumption of suicide. That evening, the police arrived at Alma Cottage and arrested William Gardiner.

Gardiner, who was often thought to be a man of iron nerve, belied his reputation by fainting dead away, and had to be given brandy before he was removed. The police also took some of his clothing and some kitchen knives. Georgianna also succumbed to a faint as her husband was led away. At Halesworth police station, Gardiner was searched and a clasp knife was found in his pocket, which was taken away for examination.

It wasn't until 6 June that the police interviewed gamekeeper James Morris who had some startling information. He had been walking through the village at 5am on the

morning of the murder, and had seen some footprints, leading from Alma House which aroused his curiosity. Morris knew about the scandal, and took care to examine the prints and follow them. They went to Providence House and back again. The police returned to Alma Cottage and took away Gardiner's shoes.

By the time the inquest re-opened on 16 June, Home Office experts had completed their examination of the medicine bottle. The cleaned label showed that the contents had been a prescription for Mrs. Gardiner's children. Further information was emerging – the envelope containing the assignation letter was of a kind used in Gardiner's office. Mr and Mrs Crisp did not take the East Anglian Daily Times, while William Gardiner did.

The hearings of the magistrates' court and the resumed inquest gave further opportunity to air new evidence, both for and against Gardiner. Harry Harsent, Rose's brother said that he had taken letters between Rose and Gardiner, some the previous year and two in 1902. The postman stated that he had delivered other stamped letters to Rose in similar envelopes and with similar handwriting to that of the assignation letter. It was posted locally, which was unusual. Perhaps the sender had not wanted to be seen approaching Providence House. It was in Gardiner's favour that the best efforts of the Home Office had failed to find any trace of blood or paraffin on any of his clothing or shoes.



Could there however have been the opportunity for Gardiner to dispose of any incriminating evidence? A local man Herbert Stammers, stated that on the morning after the murder Gardiner had lit a fire in his washhouse. It was 7.30 a.m. and while he had occasionally known them to light a fire there this was earlier than normal and seemed unusually large. Examination of the clasp knife showed that recent efforts had been made to clean it, but there remained minute traces of blood which could be confirmed as mammalian.

By the end of June, Mrs. Dickinson had given some further thought to her initial estimate of the time of arrival of the Gardiners at her home. She now said that Georgianna had arrived first at approximately 11.30, and that William had followed later. The length of this gap was never quite determined but it was at least half an hour and possibly even an hour. Even after admitting to the gap in time, which was explained as due to William seeing that the children were settled for the night, the Gardiners naturally tried their best to suggest that the interval was a very few minutes.

Gardiner's trial at the Suffolk Assizes opened on 6 November 1902. His defence counsel, 33 year old Ernest Wild was a strong believer in his client's innocence, and took the view that the whole case was based on lying scandalous gossip. There was no proof that Rose's child was Gardiner's, and none that he was the writer of the assignation letter. The blood on the knife had a wholly innocent explanation – it had been used to gut a rabbit. In Gardiner's favour was his reputation as a model father, respected artisan and pillar of the church, and the evidence of indecent letters in Rose's drawer which suggested that there might be other men with motive to commit the crime.

The jury deliberated for four and half hours, but were unable to agree on a verdict. They had voted eleven to one in favour of

## TWO ALTERNATIVES.

United Press Association—By Electric  
Telegraph—Copyright.

(Received Jan. 27, 10.58 a.m.)

LONDON, Jan. 26.

There is a strong feeling in favour of either re-trying Gardiner at Old Bailey, on the earliest possible date, or dropping the prosecution. Regret is expressed at the absence of the Scottish non-proven system.

(The provision for a verdict of not-proven is peculiar to Scottish criminal law. In cases where a jury may consider the evidence against an accused person not strong enough to secure his conviction, but may still hold that there is doubt about the case, which further evidence might dispel, it is competent for the jury to return a verdict of "not-proven." This means the acquittal of the accused, but only on the understanding that the trial may be reopened at any time and fresh evidence adduced.)

conviction, but in 1902 juries needed to be unanimous. There would have to be another trial. This result swung the tide of popular opinion in Gardiner's favour, and a defence fund was started. Newspapers were now casting Rose not as the innocent defiled, but as the kind of loose woman who actually enjoyed Davies's poems and therefore could have had any number of lovers.

The second trial was held in January 1903 and the physical toll it had taken on Georgianna became evident. Sustained by smelling salts, she eventually succumbed to a hysterical fit. She was removed from the court moaning, and continued moaning throughout the lunch break. Her audible distress must have concentrated the minds of the jury on the consequences of hanging a man with a wife and six children. Once again the jury was unable to reach a verdict, although this time voting was eleven to one in favour of acquittal. It was looking as though Gardiner was going to have to face a third trial, but the end of January it was announced that the Crown had decided not to proceed any further against William Gardiner. He had been neither convicted nor acquitted – but he was a free man.

## THE PEASENHALL MURDER.

LONDON, January 25.

The second trial of William Gardiner, who is charged with the murder of Rose Harsent, a domestic servant, at Peasenhall, was concluded yesterday, after lasting four days. The jury again were unable to agree, as at the first trial, and the prisoner is to be tried a third time in June next.

(The "Times Weekly," of 14th November, says:—The trial which had begun on Thursday, 6th November, at Ipswich, before Mr. Justice Grantham, of William Gardiner, a carpenter, indicted for the wilful murder of Rose Anne Harsent, at Peasenhall, on 1st June, was concluded on Monday. The prisoner had been rather prominently connected with the religious life of the district, and, according to the evidence, had been suspected of an intrigue with the girl, whom he is alleged to have murdered. The jury, after nearly five hours' deliberation, were unable to agree and were discharged. The prisoner will be tried again at the next assizes.)



THE ACCUSED GIVES EVIDENCE  
IN THE WITNESS BOX.

The Gardiners left Peasenhall, took a corner shop in Norwood, and lived quietly. The case came to prominence only once more, in 1904 when a man in prison made a confession to the murder. The family rejoiced that the truth had come out at last, but it soon became obvious that the prisoner knew only what he had read in the newspapers and his story broke down under questioning. Georgianna, who bore William two more children, remained loyal to her husband to the last, always convinced of his innocence. William Gardiner died in 1941, Georgianna seven years later.

Recent comparisons of the assignation note with Gardiner's handwriting leave little doubt that he was the author. The opinion of this writer is that Gardiner murdered Rose, but it was probably unplanned. Perhaps Rose tasked him with her pregnancy, demanding support for the child, maybe even threatening to expose his involvement if he didn't pay up. But if the murder was unplanned, why would Gardiner have arrived at Providence with a bottle of paraffin and a newspaper to use as tinder? One answer, suggested by retired policeman and crime writer Stewart P. Evans, is that he did not. After the murder Gardiner ran home, changed his shoes and clothes, which he was obliged to either clean or destroy later, cleaned off the knife and hurried over to Mrs Dickinson's. Later that night, he crept out of bed, and hurried across the road, carrying with him the newspaper and a bottle of paraffin. He had poured the supply into an old medicine bottle ramming the cork in tightly so it would not spill in his pocket, but he couldn't remove the cork and was obliged to smash the bottle to get the paraffin out. Lighting the fire he hurried home, believing that the fire would disguise what had happened, hoping perhaps that Rose's death would be put down to an accident. Like so many murderers in similar circumstances, he was to be disappointed in the power of fire to obliterate his guilt. ■

# 60 SECONDS WITH KATE COLQUHOUN

Frogg Moody

What inspired you to write on true crime?

For me every story has to be more than the sum of its obvious parts - a combination of great location and themes that still speak to us today - enough to be able to punch a hole in time and peer through it more closely at the past, to get up close to it and really try to understand the way our forbears thought and felt. After the tube and bus bombings in London, and in the midsts of a digital revolution transforming our lives faster and more furiously than ever before, making us all nervous, I felt we were at a similar point to society in 1864: both proud and scared of progress and wondering whether there is a price to be paid for it all. This story of the first murder on a British train - a crime that shocked and galvanised the nation - ticked all those boxes.

What was the reason for writing about Mrs. Maybrick?

I enjoyed writing Mr Briggs, being a historian but also playing with the form of the book in the way a novelist does, ramping up the tension, slowing the pace, drawing character and location. People seemed to like it and it did well, - so there was no reason not to do another. I needed a different time period (30 odd years later), a story with a load of good primary source material and it helped that at its centre was a woman - I'd never written about a woman before and that certainly appealed.

What new research did you conduct regarding 'Did She Kill Him'?

There are enormous boxes of Home Office Material at the National Archives and I trawled through every piece of paper. I walked endlessly around Liverpool, gained access to the (now private) County Sessions House, and to Battlecrease House and the Private Black Museum at Scotland Yard (where I found new documents written by Dr Carter after the trial. And of course I read everything already written about the case (and discounted most of it). I came at it with fresh eyes and no agenda and turned over the stones until I felt there were no more to be lifted. Then I set it down as I saw it, giving it historical context and drawing out the themes of that particular era - unlovely transatlantic marriages, proto feminism, addiction, sexual hypocrisy.

Any plans for other true crime books?

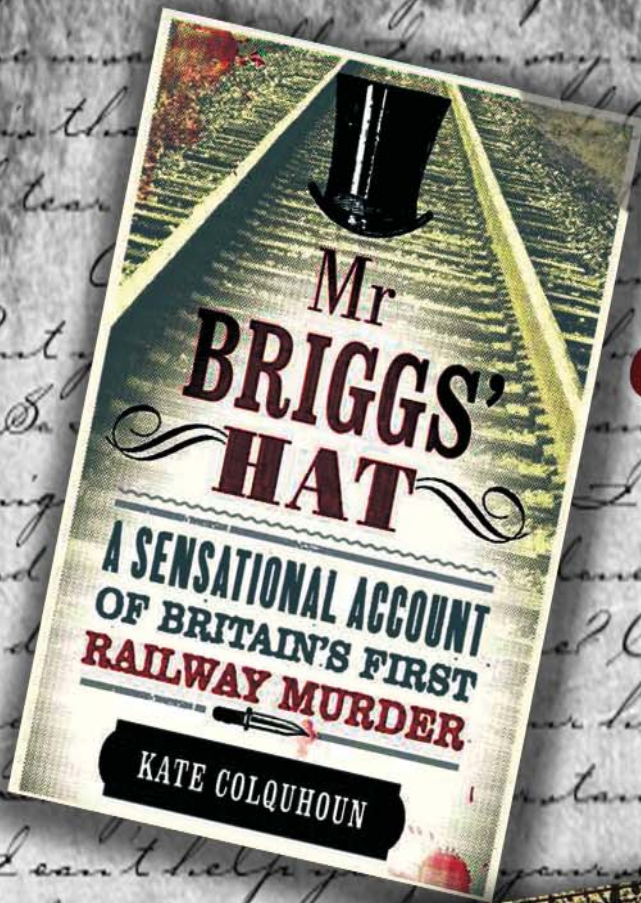
No. Two is enough for now. Back to some other part of history but it will be about real lives, extraordinary things, that's for sure ■



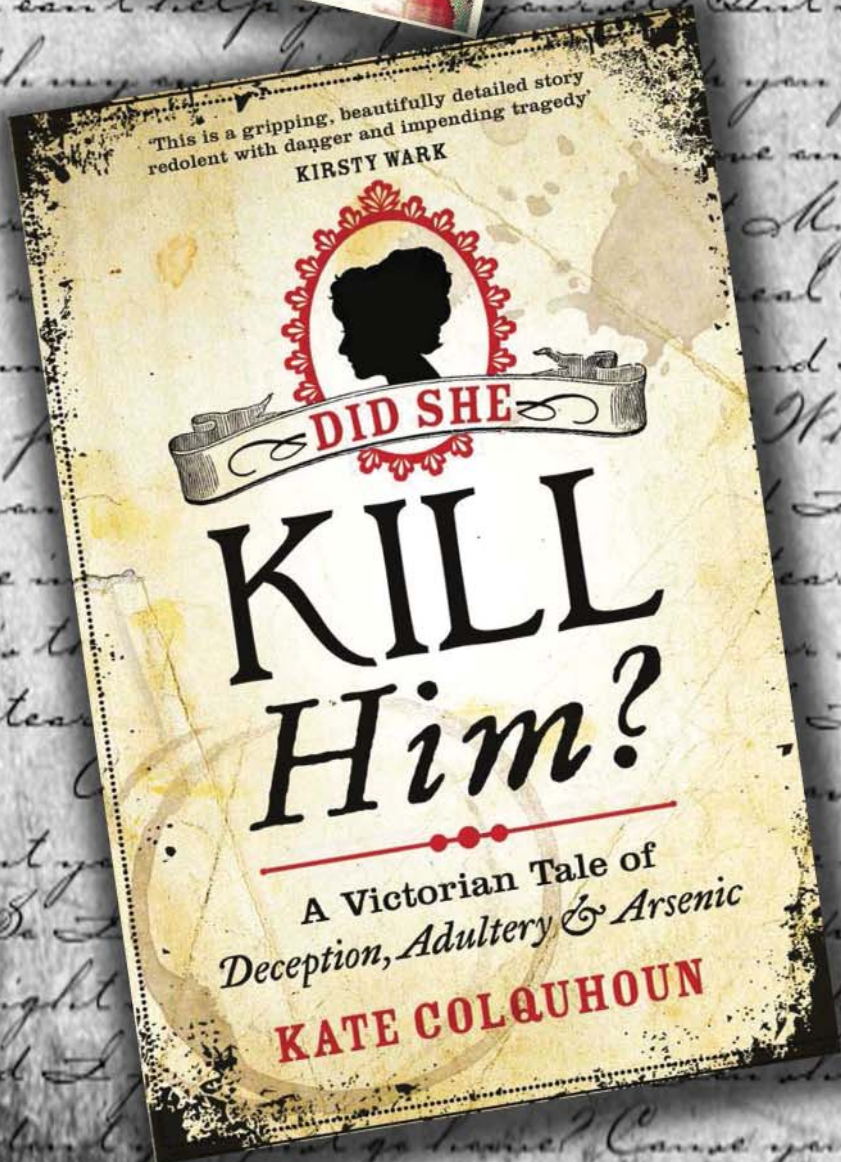
## KATE COLQUHOUN

Kate is the author of several histories, including the acclaimed biography of Joseph Paxton, *Taste* (A History of Britain Through its Food) and *Mr Briggs' Hat*, the NO1 bestselling account of the first murder on a British train. Her account of the sensational Maybrick case of 1889 - *Did She Kill Him?* - was published by Little Brown in March 2014. Kate has taught the Faber Academy Narrative Non Fiction writing course, is a Royal Literary Fund Mentor, writes and reviews regularly for the national press and appears from time to time on radio and television. She lives in West London with her two sons.





**BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
KATE COLOUHOUN  
WILL BE SPEAKING AT THE  
CASEBOOK: CLASSIC CRIME  
LONDON CONFERENCE  
MAY 2ND 2015**



Shortlisted for a  
CWA (Crime Writers'  
Association) Silver  
Dagger Award

Available in all  
good bookshops  
and online

**CASEBOOK CLASSIC**

**CRIME**

**LIVE**

**LONDON CONFERENCE 2015**

**'MISCARRIAGES OF JUSTICE'**

**PROFESSOR DAVID TAYLOR**

DEBATING THE DEATH PENALTY IN  
19TH AND 20TH CENTURY ENGLAND

**MONICA WELLER**

"HOW I CAME TO GHOST-WRITE  
RUTH ELLIS MY SISTER'S SECRET LIFE"

**ROBIN ODELL**

"LET HIM HAVE IT CHRIS!"

**JONATHAN OATES**

THE MYTH OF THE INNOCENCE OF  
TIMOTHY EVANS

**WILLIAM BEADLE**

LEE HARVEY OSWALD

**KATE COLQUHOUN**

DID SHE KILL HIM?  
MRS FLORENCE MAYBRICK

**SATURDAY MAY 2ND 2015 - DIRTY DICKS PUB - 10.00AM - 6.00PM**

[WWW.TIMEZONEPUBLISHING.COM](http://WWW.TIMEZONEPUBLISHING.COM)

# LONDON CONFERENCE 2015

## 'MISCARRIAGES OF JUSTICE'

SATURDAY MAY 2ND 2015 - DIRTY DICKS PUB - 10.00AM - 6.00PM

'Dirty Dicks' is directly opposite Liverpool Street mainline station.

Advance Tickets £20 - 'early bird' offer and £30 on the door.

Tickets include a year subscription to Casebook: Classic Crime magazine



### RAYMOND SHAW

Raymond will be your host for the Casebook: Classic Crime conference 2015.

He set up Shaw Graham Kersh solicitors in Soho in 1999. The firm specialises in criminal defence work and has won independent recognition as a leading firm in this field. The firm has acted in numerous high profile cases and having defended the full range of criminal offences from murder to complex fraud Raymond has extensive knowledge of police and prosecution work practices and procedures and how and why things can go wrong.

*"Anyone can find themselves accused of crime. It's vital to hold the authorities to account, to challenge and test every case, or we are all at risk of a miscarriage of justice".*

A former President of the London Criminal Courts Solicitors Association and through his continued involvement in that organisation, Raymond has represented solicitors in meetings with the senior Judiciary and the Crown Prosecution Service and actively campaigns against the *"government's continued assault on legal aid and access to justice."*

Raymond has recently started offering support and advice to the charity ReUnite, working with parents whose children have been abducted. Raymond has two teenage children, two young cats, and one (*American, and true crime fanatic*) wife.

Tickets Sales:

[frogg@timezonepublishing.com](mailto:frogg@timezonepublishing.com)

[WWW.TIMEZONEPUBLISHING.COM](http://WWW.TIMEZONEPUBLISHING.COM)

# LONDON CONFERENCE 2015

## 'MISCARRIAGES OF JUSTICE'

### PROFESSOR DAVID TAYLOR



David Taylor is emeritus professor of history at the University of Huddersfield. He has written extensively on crime and policing in modern Britain including the well-received *Hooligans, Harlots and Hangmen: Crime and Punishment in Victorian Britain*.

David will be discussing the death penalty: its history, its rights, its wrongs and why it was abolished in the UK.

### KATE COLQUHOUN



Kate is the author of an acclaimed biography of Joseph Paxton, *'Taste' (A History of Britain Through its Food)* and *Mr Briggs' Hat*, the NO1 bestselling account of the first murder on a British train.

Kate will be talking about how she came to write her latest book - *'Did She Kill Him?'* and how her research of the 1889 events led her to re-assess the standard view of events that raise the question, 'did she kill him?'

### ROBIN ODELL



Robin Odell has written or co-written many books in the field of criminology and forensic science. He won the Edgar Award from the Mystery Writers of America in 1980 and 2007, and Gold Medal, IP Book Awards, New York 2007.

### JONATHAN OATES



Jonathan is Borough Archivist for Ealing. He has had over 30 articles, 20 plus books and other material published; on local and family history, the history of the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, and criminal history. The latter chiefly cover London and include biographies of fellow Yorkshiremen, Johns Haigh and Christie. He is not afraid to promote unorthodox views. He is currently working on a study of triple murderer Ronald Chesney and has a book about the last battle on English soil ready for publication later this year.

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

SATURDAY MAY 2ND 2015 - DIRTY DICKS PUB - 10.00AM - 6.00PM

## MONICA WELLER

Monica Weller is a freelance writer and ghost writer of 'Ruth Ellis : My Sister's Secret Life', in which she unveiled fresh evidence about the last woman to be hanged in the UK. She lectures throughout the UK, and campaigns in search for the truth, re-examining evidence upon which Ellis was convicted and hanged in 1955 and is considered the foremost authority on the subject.

Monica will talk about Ruth Ellis and the talk is titled "How I came to ghost-write 'Ruth Ellis': my Sister's Secret Life".



## WILLIAM BEADLE

WILLIAM BEADLE is on the committee of Dealey Plaza U.K., the Society which investigates the assassination of John F Kennedy. He is author of two books on miscarriages of justice, 'THE KILLING OF LEON BERON' and 'WRONGLY HANGED'. He is co-author a recent book on the Hanratty case and 'A ROPE FOR ALL SEASONS' - examining the cases of 24 men and woman who were hanged in Britain for crimes they did not commit between 1901 and 1953.

He will be talking about the events surrounding President Kennedy's assassination at Dealey Plaza, and will present the arguments for Oswald's innocence as the actual perpetrator.

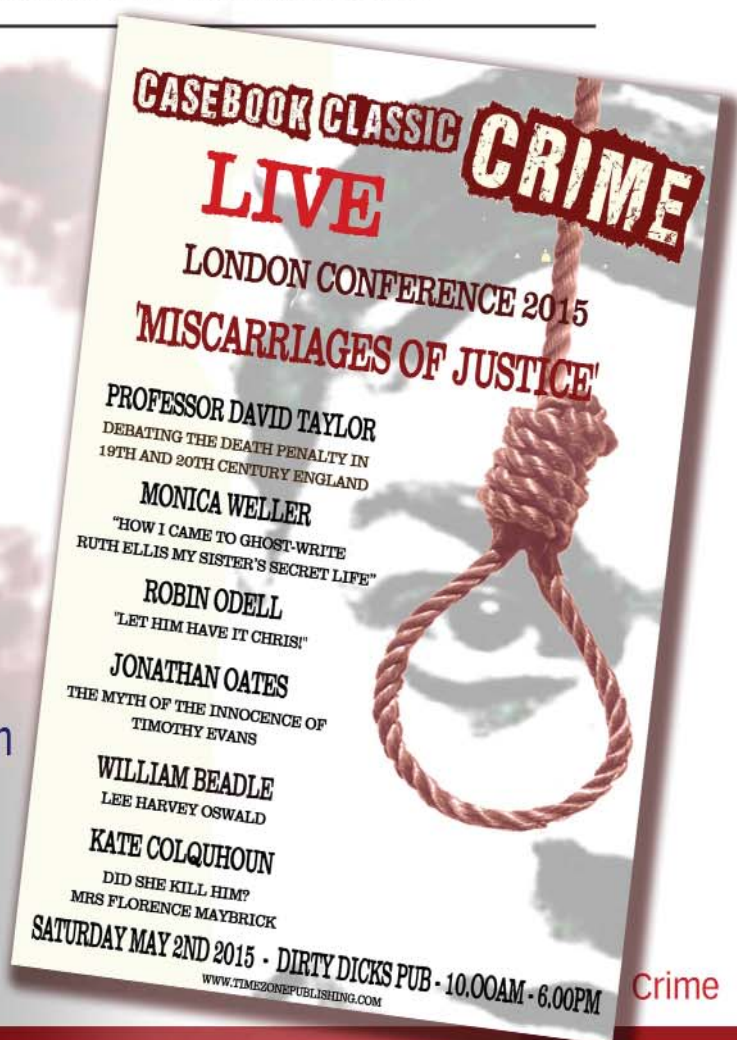


'Dirty Dicks' is directly opposite Liverpool Street mainline station.

Advance Tickets £20 'early bird offer' and £30 thereafter. Tickets include a complimentary year subscription to Casebook: Classic Crime magazine.

Tickets Sales:

[frogg@timezonepublishing.com](mailto:frogg@timezonepublishing.com)



Crime

# PICK OF THE COPS

## THE CASEBOOK CLASSIC CRIME TOP 10

Greetings crime pickers, old Thomas de Quincy thought the British were turning into a nation of 'murder fanciers' and here with 'Pick of the Cops' we're going to prove him right, right? This Countdown is down to your votes folks, and a nostalgic bunch you've turned out to be. It might seem tasteless, but unless you're Hannibal Lecter, that's the nature of murder boys and girls. So what did you crime pickers, pick? We present your Top Ten counting down to your all time winner...



**10.** And coming in at number 10 is ELIZABETH SHORT also known as "The Black Dahlia". Many have confessed to this Californian caper but nobody has drawn the Short straw.



**9.** A non-mover at number 9 is Peter Sutcliffe. Yes, he's been around for a few years and now The Yorkshire Ripper is known as The Broadmoor slipper – locked up for using false number plates on his Reliant Robin.....



**8.** Straight in at number 8 is MARY PEARCEY with her cover version of 'Hit the Road Jack' a Ripping good rocker!



**7.** No 7 has the HAMMERSMITH NUDES – and a man known to his friends as 'Jack the Stripper' – well his victims were found naked by the Thames right?



**6.** Up to No 6 is the invisible man of murder, 'Lucky' LORD LUCAN. Lady Ga Ga Lucan said he done it and many have reported seeing him around the world, but it's probably too late for a comeback now.....



**5.** No 5 has the young teenage sensation CONSTANCE KENT singing 'Please release me'. We'll let you know in 20 years honey!



**4.** On the way down at No 4 is JOHN REGINALD CHRISTIE who has 'Another Brick in the Wall' – there's plenty of space at Rillington Place!



**3.** No 3 and reaching for the stars is America's answer to Mystic Meg, THE ZODIAC KILLER. He's 'California Dreaming' all right!



**2.** Not quite the top dog but hanging in there at No 2 is WILLIAM HERBERT WALLACE. Yes the chess fanatic who also wrote the classic 'Poker Face' is still looking for an address near you.....



**1.** And Crime Pickers, remaining at number **No 1**, from November 1910 – its HAWLEY HARVEY CRIPPEN with 'My Little Runaway'. Cora spade a spade I say.....

*Until the next Pick of the Cops it's Frogg Moody with your nightmare countdown*

# Murderous Merchandise



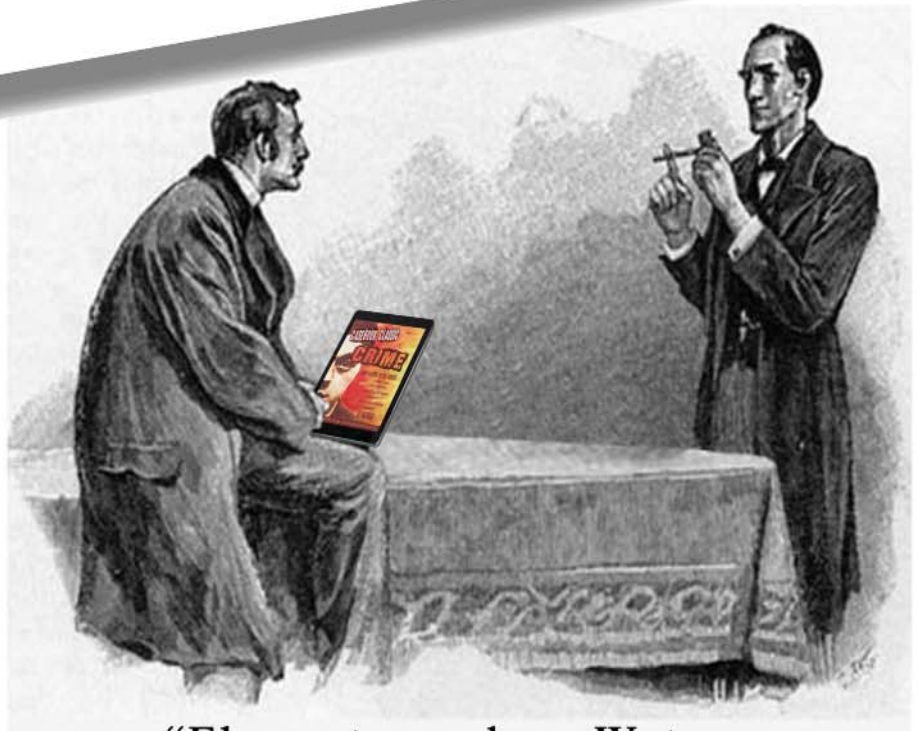
*Our 'Be Lucky' Lord Lucan 'T' Shirt is 'a must' for husbands having trouble exiting the marriage. Communicate your feelings clearly without argument.*



*Feeding the dog can be murder*

**POLICE NOTICE**

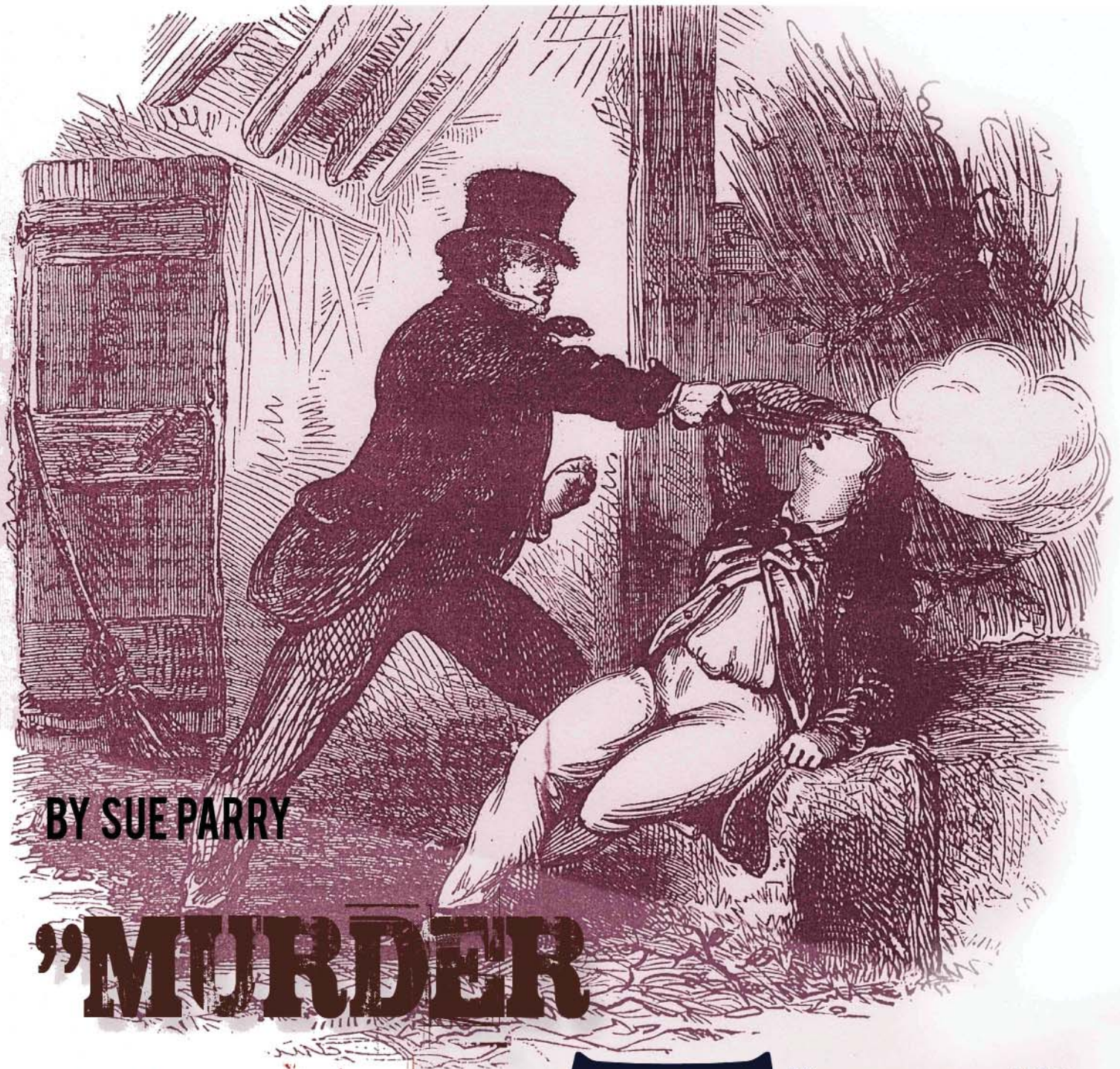
**DON'T  
COMMIT  
CRIME**



“Elementary, dear Watson.  
You need to subscribe to  
Casebook: Classic Crime - *today*”.

[www.timezonepublishing.com](http://www.timezonepublishing.com)  
[frogg@timezonepublishing.com](mailto:frogg@timezonepublishing.com)





BY SUE PARRY

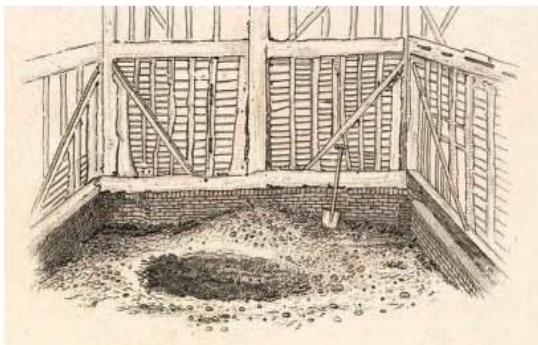
“MURDER

IN THE

RED

BARN”

The year was 1827. George IV was King and it is the year in which there was considerable political turmoil. Prime Minister Lord Liverpool had suffered a stroke in February and he resigned from office in April. The King asked George Canning to succeed him. However Canning died on 27th August having been PM for 119 days and in January 1828 the Duke of Wellington took the Primeministrial helm. However, it is quite possible that all of this passed by the inhabitants of the sleepy village of Polstead in Suffolk.



A correct View of the Exterior.



THE RED BARN AT POLSTEAD.



Maria Martin's Grave.



The infamous Red Barn Murder happened in Polstead in 1827 and I am a distant relation of the victim's sister. There were no pictures of the victim, Maria Martin, and so all pictures of her were actually taken from 'a likeness of her sister' - the girl on my family tree. Solving puzzles is at the heart of any fascination with historic crimes and it is this connection to the victim that sparked my interest.

The murder captured the public imagination as '*WICKED SQUIRE KILLS DEFLOWERED LOCAL MAID*'. It had happened before, but the Squire was rarely prosecuted. Fervent interest in this '*Broadside blockbuster*' was heightened by the iconic Red Barn and the strange premonitions of the victim's stepmother that would lead so precisely to the uncovering of the body. There was also the convenient evidence that William Corder, after he shot Maria Martin, should leave his Green handkerchief around the buried girls throat to so conclusively tie him to the crime.

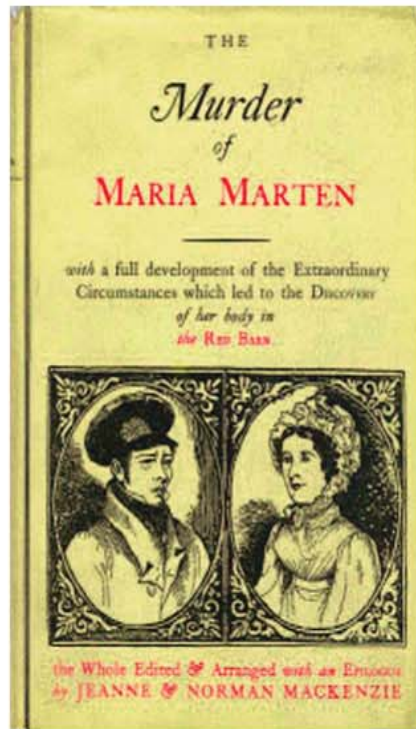
Maria Martin was not the '*innocent maid*' of so many later versions of the story: she had given birth to three illegitimate children - one by Thomas Henry, who would occasionally send her money and another by one of Williams' older brothers. She had also had a child by William Corder, but it had died, so there is the question of why he felt the need to meet her in the Red Barn with promises of eloping to Ipswich to get married.

A clue to how difficult life must have been for a girl in Maria Martins' circumstances is that amongst all the grisly artifacts held in the Bury St. Edmunds collection on the murder, the sparse remnants of her life amount to the pairs of irons she used on her clothes.

William Corder, nicknamed "*foxy*" on account of his sly manner, was involved in numerous petty crimes. He escaped prosecution, but his '*friends*' were under no illusions: Samuel "Beauty" Smith who took the fall on one pig stealing episode made a prophetic statement: "I'll be damned if he will not be hung some of these days".



WILLIAM CORDER  
As he appeared in *Dress Coat* a few days previous to his Trial.



MARIA MARTEN.

The Corder family lived in an elegant house in the centre of the village and had one of the biggest farms in the neighbourhood.

William Corder had been sent to London in disgrace after his fraudulent sale of the pigs, but he was recalled to Polstead after his brother, Thomas, drowned attempting to cross a frozen pond. Then, his father and three brothers all died within 18 months of each other. 22-year-old William Corder was now the local squire, and ran the farm with the help of his mother. He would have been 'a catch' for a local girl and The Red Barn, a favourite local rendezvous point, was on his farm and a short walk from the cottage of the Martin family.

Maria Martin was the daughter of a 'Mole-catcher' who worked in Polstead, Suffolk.

She had previously courted Thomas Corder, an elder brother and had a child by him. In March 1826, when she was 24, she formed a relationship with the 22-year-old William Corder (born 1803), although it must have been obvious from her previous experience that someone in William Corder's position was never likely to marry her.

It has been said that Corder wished to keep his relationship with Marten a secret, however, she became pregnant for the third time and was apparently keen that she and Corder should marry. Why wouldn't she be? After all, he was the local Squire and more importantly ran the large and busy farm. William's mother relied heavily on him and indeed him on her for his livelihood.

William Corder made arrangements for Maria to move to Sudbury and there she gave birth to a boy in April 1827. Maria and her son returned to her father's cottage but the baby lived for less than a month. Later reports suggested that it may have been murdered. Why else would William Corder find himself in a situation where he felt pressurized to marry Maria Martin? Certainly, it is far from clear where the baby was buried and no grave has been found where they later claimed one to be. This theory is further supported in that Maria's parents began to put pressure on Corder to marry their daughter, when he resisted it would appear that they 'threatened to reveal the details about the baby to the authorities'.



A contemporary sketch of Maria Marten's cottage in Polstead. She is being approached by the fortune teller who said she would meet a wealthy man on a Grey horse.

Did William Corder murder the child that he had with Maria Martin? We may not know for certain, but the threats by Maria's parents were enough that he eventually agreed. He said he would take Maria to Ipswich to get married. Why Ipswich? He gave Maria's parents two reasons. Firstly he said it was because the village constable had told him that he had received a letter from the rector of Polstead instructing him to "*proceed against Maria about her bastard children*" and secondly (and probably the real reason) because he did not want his mother to know about his marriage.

In the presence of her stepmother, Ann Marten, he suggested that Maria Martin meet him at the Red Barn, from where he proposed that they elope to Ipswich. He initially suggested they elope on the Wednesday evening, but later decided to delay until the Thursday. On Thursday he again delayed: some sources claim that this was due to his brother falling ill, although most claim all his brothers were dead by this time.

Then on Friday, 18 May 1827, he appeared at the Martens' cottage and according to Ann Marten, told Maria that they must leave at once, as he had heard that the local constable had a warrant to prosecute her (*no warrant had been obtained, but it is not known if Corder was lying or was mistaken*). Maria was worried that she could not leave in broad daylight, but Corder told her she should dress in men's clothing so as to avert suspicion, and gave her a brown coat, stripped waistcoat and blue trousers so that she could disguise herself as a man. He would carry her things to the barn where she could meet him and change before they continued on to Ipswich. He claimed that the marriage licence was in place and that the wedding would take place there later that day. He said that speed was of the essence and that it was vital that Maria was not seen by either the village constable or his mother, Mrs. Corder, and told her to meet him at the Red Barn.

It would be the last time anyone would see Maria Martin alive.

15 months later, at his trial, William Corder explained his version of events as:

*"We entered the barn and while changing her dress, Maria flew into a passion. She told me she did not care anything about me. That I was too proud to take her to my mother's and when married she did not think she would be happy as my mother and my family, she was sure, would never notice her. I felt so insulted and became so irritated by her observations that I told her I had seen sufficient to convince me that we should never live happily together and I was, therefore, resolved, before it was too late, not to marry her, informing her that I would return home."*

Corder said that he then left the building and:

*"I had scarcely proceeded to the outer gate of the Barn Yard, when there was a sound like that of a gun or pistol. Alarmed at the noise, I immediately ran back and found, to my horror, Maria on the ground. I tried to raise her from the ground, but*

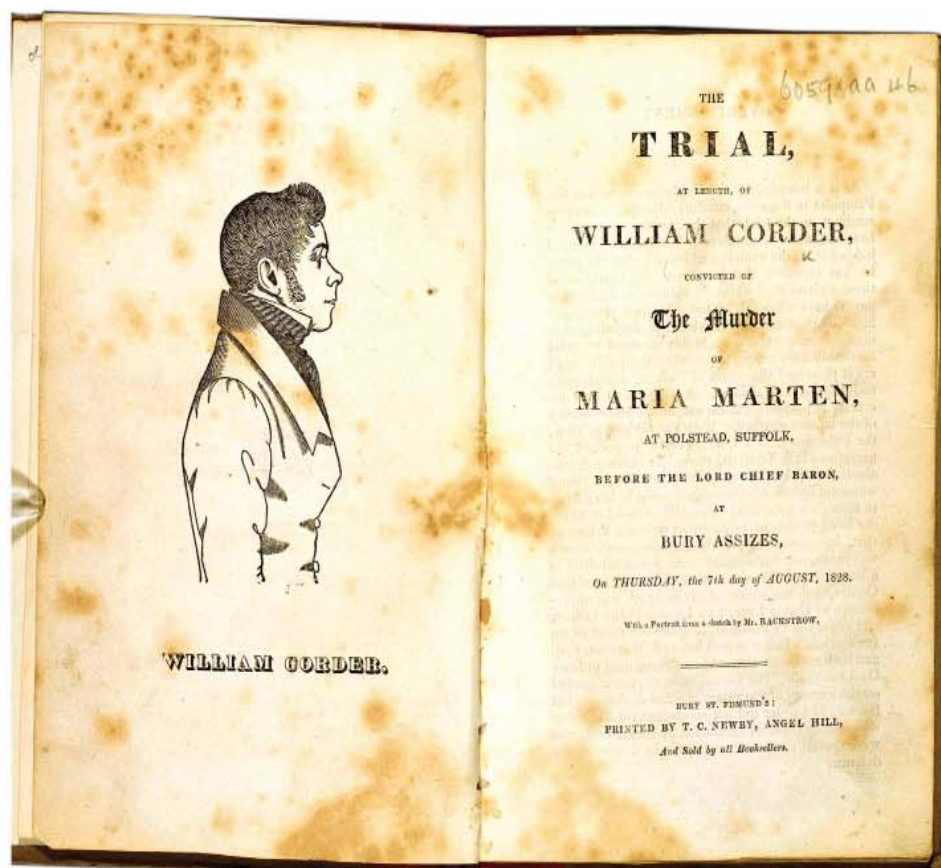
*found her entirely lifeless. To my horror, I discovered the pistol was one of my own she had taken from my bedroom. There she lay, killed by one of my own pistols and I the only being there. I do not know what to do".*

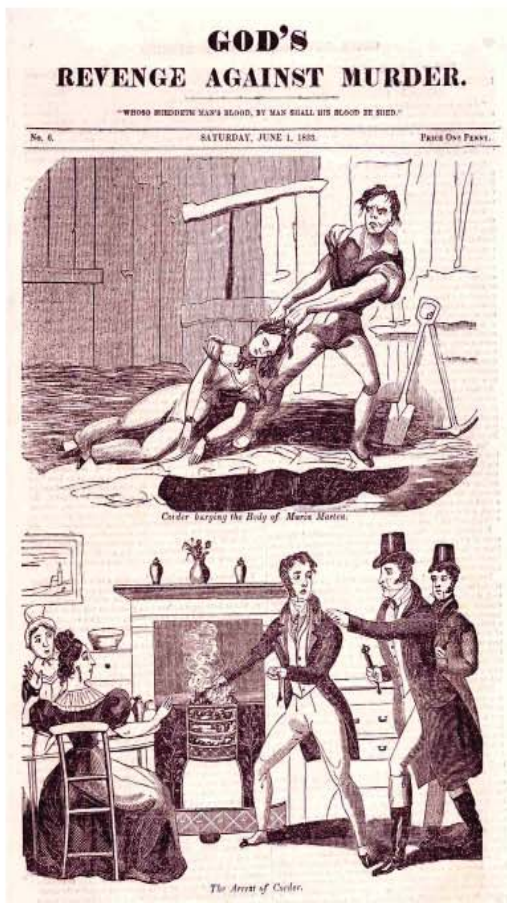
He then went on to admit to burying Maria's body under the floor of the Red Barn in a fit of panic.

However, returning to May 1827. Several days after the rendezvous in the Red Barn, Corder went to the Martin's cottage and told them he had to leave Maria in Ipswich as the wedding licence had been sent to London by mistake and would not be ready for a number of weeks. However, he said, not to worry as Maria was going to spend some time in Yarmouth.

Corder then returned to his mother's farm and spent the next few months getting the harvest in. To anyone who enquired about Maria whereabouts, he maintained the same "holiday in Yarmouth" story.

In September William's father's will was





finally settled and William inherited £1250 (something in the region of £450,000 by today's values). With this he announced that he was leaving Polstead and going to London. He gave the Martins an address in Leadenhall Street, Aldgate where he said that he and Maria would be together again and a few weeks later Corder wrote telling them that he and Maria were now married. He even enclosed money for the upkeep of Maria's son and indicated that the little lad would soon be able to join them.

However, all of this was a lie. On 12th Nov 1827 Corder placed the following advertisement in the Morning Herald, repeating it on 25th Nov in the Sunday Times:

*'Matrimony. A private gentleman, aged 24, entirely independent, whose disposition is not to be exceeded, has lately lost the chief of his family by the hand of Providence. To any female of respectability who would study for domestic comfort, and willing to confide her future*

*happiness in one every way qualified to render the marriage state desirable; as the advertiser is in affluence, the lady must have the power of some property, which may remain in her possession. Should this meet the eye of any agreeable lady who feels desirous of meeting a sociable, tender, kind and sympathising companion, they will find this advertisement worthy of notice, Honour and secrecy may be relied upon'.*

Corder received a total of 99 replies from these two adverts. One was from a Mary Moore, a school-teacher who lived with her widowed mother in Seaford in East Sussex. It was not long before the couple had married and the two of them decided to open their own school. Suitable premises were found in Brentford and Mary's mother moved in with the couple.

However, back in Polstead Maria's step-mother Ann was becoming more and more worried about her step-daughter. In early April 1828, not having seen Maria for nearly 11 months, Ann suddenly told her husband that she had been having a number of dreams in which she saw Corder shoot Maria and bury her body under the floor of the Red Barn. Although Thomas Martin was concerned that he hadn't seen or heard from his daughter or "son-in-law" for many months he was not immediately convinced by his wife's psychic powers. However Ann Martin persisted and on 19th April Thomas Martin asked Mrs Corder for permission to search the Red Barn.



Mrs Corder agreed and Thomas, along with one of Mrs Corder's employees, proceeded to dig up the floor of the barn. At a depth of about two feet the two men found the decomposing corpse of a young woman. Much to the distress of Thomas Martin, there was little doubt that this was the body of his daughter. The village constable was called and a coroner's jury was convened at the local pub, The Cock Inn. Thomas Martin gave evidence about the last day he had seen his daughter alive and as a result a warrant was issued for the arrest of William Corder.

The Coroner instructed the Boxted village constable, Constable Ayres, to go in search of William Corder. On arrival in London, Constable Ayres engaged the services of a professional "thief taker", James Lea.

It didn't take Lea long to track down William Corder in Brentford. Much to the horror of his wife and mother-in-law, Corder was arrested and transported back to Suffolk. A search of the Brentford property revealed a pair of pistols which had been bought on the day of the murder.

On arrival back in Polstead, the inquest was resumed and the Coroner ordered Corder to be taken to the jail in Bury St Edmunds and from there he stood trial at the Shire Hall on 7th August.

In the intervening period however, Maria had been buried in the graveyard of St Mary's church in Polstead. Souvenir hunters over the years have gradually destroyed Maria's headstone and all that can be seen today is a simple wooden plaque attached to the side of a shed at the rear of the church.

There was frenzied broadsheet coverage of the case and much was made of the disguise, the murder and Mrs Martin's psychic powers. A cast of travelling players toured the country performing the "Red Barn Murder", earthenware models of the barn were manufactured and sold in their hundreds as well as portraits of Maria and

## CONFESSION AND EXECUTION OF **WILLIAM CORDER,** THE MURDERER OF MARIA MARTEN.

Since the tragical affair between Thurtell and Ware, no event has occurred connected with the criminal annals of our country which has excited so much interest as the trial of Corder, who was justly convicted of the murder of Maria Marten on Friday last.

### THE CONFESSION.

"Bury God, August 10th, 1828.—Condemed cell. "Sunday evening, half-past Eleven.

"I acknowledge being guilty of the death of poor Maria Marten, by shooting her with a pistol. The particulars are as follows:—When we left her father's house, we began quarrelling about the burial of the child: she apprehended the place wherein it was deposited would be found out. The quarrel continued about three quarters of an hour upon this and about other subjects. A scuffle ensued, and during the scuffle, and at the time I think that she had hold of me, I took the pistol from the side, pocket of my velveteen jacket and fired. She fell, and died in an instant. I never saw her even struggle. I was overwhelmed with agitation and dismay:—the body fell near the front doors on the floor of the barn. A vast quantity of blood issued from the wound, and ran on to the floor and through the crevices. Having determined to bury the body in the barn (about two hours after she was dead). I went and borrowed a spade of Mrs Stow, but before I went there I dragged the body from the barn into the chaff-house, and locked the barn. I returned again to the barn, and began to dig a hole, but the spade being a bad one, and the earth firm and hard, I was obliged to go home for a pickaxe and a better spade, with which I dug the hole, and then buried the body. I think I dragged the body by the handkerchief that was tied round her neck. It was dark when I finished covering up the body. I went the next day, and washed the blood from off the barn-floor. I declare to Almighty God I had no sharp instrument about me, and no other wound but the one made by the pistol was inflicted by me. I have been guilty of great silliness, and at times led a dissolute life, but I hope through the mercy of God to be forgiven. WILLIAM CORDER."

Witness to the signing by the said William Corder,  
JOHN ORNDROP.

Condemed cell, Eleven o'clock, Monday morning, August 11th, 1828.

The above confession was read over carefully to the prisoner in our presence, who stated most solemnly it was true, and that he had nothing to add to or retract from it.—W. STROCKOS, chaplain; THOMAS R. HOLMES, Under-Sheriff.

### THE EXECUTION.

At ten minutes before twelve o'clock the prisoner was brought from his cell and pinioned by the hangman, who was brought from London for the purpose. He appeared resigned, but was so weak as to be unable to stand without support; when his cravat was removed he grunted heavily, and appeared to be labouring under great mental agony. When his wrists and arms were made fast, he was led round towards the scaffold, and

as he passed the different yards in which the prisoners were confined, he shook hands with them, and speaking to two of them by name, he said, "Good bye, God bless you." They appeared considerably affected by the wretched appearance which he made, and "God bless you!" "May God receive your soul!" were frequently uttered as he passed along. The chaplain walked before the prisoner, reading the usual Bural Service, and the Governor and Officers walking immediately after him. The prisoner was supported to the steps which led to the scaffold; he looked somewhat wildly around, and a constable was obliged to support him while the hangman was adjusting the fatal cord. There was a barrier to keep off the crowd, amounting to upwards of 7,000 persons, who at this time had stationed themselves in the adjoining fields, on the hedges, the tops of houses, and at every point from which a view of the execution could be seen obtained. The prisoner, a few moments before the drop fell, grunted heavily, and would have fallen, had not a second constable caught hold of him. Everything having been made ready, the signal was given, the fatal drop fell, and the unfortunate man was launched into eternity. Just before he was turned off, he said in a feeble tone, "I am justly sentenced, and may God forgive me."

### The Murder of Maria Marten. BY W. CORDER.

COME, all you thoughtless young men, a warning tale by me, and think upon my unhappy fate to be hanged upon a tree; My name is William Corder, to you I do declare, I courted Maria Marten, most beautiful and fair. I promised I would marry her upon a certain day. Instead of that, I was contented to take her life away. I went into her father's house the 10th day of May, saying, my dear Maria, we will sit the wedding day. If you will meet me at the Red-barn, as sure as I have life, I will take you to Ipswich town, and there make me my wife; I then went home and fetched my gun, my pickaxe and my spade, I went into the Red-barn, and there I dug her grave. With heart so light, she thought on barn, to meet him she did go. He murdered her all in the barn, and laid her body low; After the horrible deed was done, she lay waiting in her grave, Her bleeding mangled body he buried beneath the Red-barn floor. Now all things being silent, her spirit could not rest. She appeared unto her mother, who scolded her at her breast; For many a long month so more, her soul being sore opprest, Neither sight or day she could not take any rest. Her mother's mind being so disturbed, she dreamt these nights o'er, Her daughter she lay murdered beneath the Red-barn floor; She went the father to the barn, who he the ground did thrust, And there he found his daughter mingling with the dust. My trial is hard, I could not stand, most woful was the night, When her jaw-bone was brought to prove, which proved my heart true. Her aged father standing by, likewise his loving wife, And in her grief her hair she tore, she scarcely could keep life. Alas, alas, my loving friends, my glass is almost run, On Monday next will be my last, when I am to be hung'd; Oh you, young men, who do pass by, with pity look on me, For murdering Maria Marten, I was hang'd upon the tree.

Printed by J. Cusack, 2 and 3, Minworth Court.—Casts, &c., Printed Clapp.

William and all before the trial had begun.

At the beginning of the trial, William Corder entered a plea of "not guilty" and told the story that Maria had shot herself. After 2 days of evidence the jury took 35 minutes to find him guilty and Corder was sentenced to death by hanging followed by dissection. This was the usual sentence for murder in the early 19th century. The practice of linking dissection with the death sentence began in 16th century when Henry VIIIth granted doctors the right to use the bodies of hanged felons for medical research. Burial of course was therefore denied and this was seen as an essential part of the penalty. This practice came to an end in 1832 with the passing of the Anatomy Act which allowed doctors to dissect donated corpses. Corder was dissected by George Creed who was a surgeon at the hospital in Bury St Edmunds.



EXECUTION OF WILLIAM CORDER, AT BURY, August 11. 1828.

Whilst in the condemned cell Corder made a confession to the Prison Governor. It read:

*"I acknowledge being guilty of the death of Maria Marten by shooting her with a pistol. When we left her father's house we began quarrelling about the burial of the child, she apprehending that the place wherein it was deposited would be found out. The quarrel continued for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a hour, upon this and other subjects. A scuffle ensued, and during the scuffle, and at that time I think she had hold of me, I took a pistol from the side pocket of my velveteen jacket and fired. She fell and died in an instant. I never even saw a struggle. I was overwhelmed with agitation and dismay – the body fell near the front doors on the floor of the barn. A vast quantity of blood issued from the wound and ran onto the floor and through the crevices. About 2 hours after she was dead I went to borrow a spade from Mr Stow. But before I went there I dragged the body from the barn into the chaff house and locked up the barn. I returned to the barn and began to dig the hole; but the spade being a bad one, and the earth firm and hard, I was obliged to go home for a pick and a better spade, with which I dug the hole and buried the body. It was dark when I finished covering the*

*body. I went the next day and washed the blood from the barn floor. I declare that I had no sharp instrument about me and that no other wound but the one made by the pistol was inflicted by me. I have been guilty of great idleness, and at times led a dissolute life, but I hope through the mercy of God to be forgiven".*

The confession was signed W Corder and was witnessed by the prison governor.

On 11 August 1828, Corder was taken to the gallows in Bury St. Edmunds, apparently too weak to stand without support. He was hanged shortly before noon in front of a huge crowd; one newspaper claimed there were 7,000 spectators, another as many as 20,000. At the prompting of the prison governor, just before the hood was drawn over his head he weakly asserted:

*"I am guilty – my sentence is just – I deserve my fate – and may God have mercy on my soul"*



After an hour his body was cut down by Foxton, the hangman, who according to his rights claimed Corder's trousers and stockings. The body was taken back to the courtroom at Shire Hall where it was slit open along the abdomen to expose the muscles. The crowds were allowed to file past until six o'clock when the doors were shut. According to the Norwich and Bury Post, over 5,000 people queued to see the body.

Surgeons then conducted 'a phrenological examination' of Corder's skull, which was asserted to be profoundly developed in the areas of "secretiveness, acquisitiveness, destructiveness, philoprogenitiveness, and imitiveness" with little evidence of "benevolence or veneration".

Pieces of the rope which was used to hang Corder sold for a guinea each. Part of Corder's scalp with an ear still attached was displayed in a shop in Oxford Street. A lock of Maria's hair sold for two guineas. Polstead became a tourist venue with visitors travelling from as far afield as Ireland; Curtis estimated that 200,000 people visited Polstead in 1828 alone.

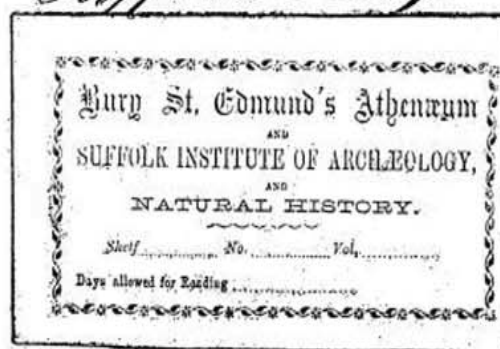
The Red Barn and the Martens' cottage excited particular interest. The barn was stripped for souvenirs, down to the planks being removed from the sides, broken up and sold as toothpicks.

Pamphlets and ballads about the trial appeared as soon as the crime was discovered. Fit-up companies, often called 'portable theatres', were thrilling audiences in the penny gaffs, barns and fairgrounds up and down the land with their individual versions of the story.

Almost overnight a large number of books

*The binding of this book is the skin of the murderer William Corder taken from his body and tanned by myself in the year 1828.*

*George Creed  
Surgeon to the  
Suffolk Hospital*



appeared, the first of which was written by James Curtis, a London journalist. There is a gruesome copy in Moyses' Hall Museum in Bury St. Edmunds bearing the inscription:

*"The binding of this book is the skin of the murderer, William Corder, taken from his body and tanned by myself in the year 1828. George Creed, Surgeon to the Suffolk Hospital".*

It was then that another version of events emerged. Rumors began to circulate about Ann Martin, Maria's stepmother. Her 'dream', in which she 'sees' the murder, was part of the story from the beginning and was reported as 'fact' at the time. Ann Marten, who had not shown any psychic ability previously, had been called to give 'evidence' of the events on the day of Maria's disappearance and her later dreams.



Certainly, the stepmother, Ann Martin, was able to direct the search party to the exact location of the body.

Further rumors circulated about the death of Corder and Marten's child. Both claimed that they had taken their dead child to be buried in Sudbury, but no records of this could be discovered and no trace of the burial site of the child was ever found. In his written confession Corder admitted that on the day of the murder he and Marten had argued over the possibility of the burial site '*being discovered*'. If it were legitimate, why worry about it being discovered? If the death was not murder, why was the burial not legitimate?

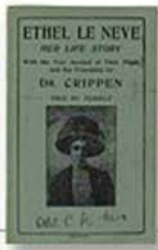
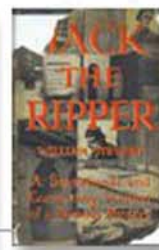
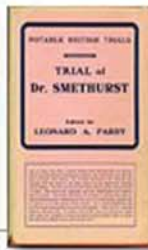
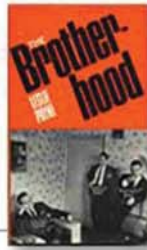
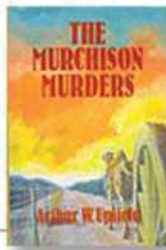
As the baby had died in the stepmother's home, she is likely to know how it had died. If she suspected the baby had been murdered she would have been able to use this to '*assert pressure*' on Corder. This may have also included the location of the baby's body, in the same way that she knew the exact location of her stepdaughters body. Did she really know this because of '*a dream*' or could she have been an accomplice?

That Ann Martin's dreams might be considered as '*evidence*' is as odd as the fact that she had no premonitions before or after the events.

After the trial, doubts were raised about both the story of the stepmother's '*dreams*', and the fate of Maria and William's child. The stepmother was only a year older than Maria, and it was suggested that she and Corder had been having an affair. The two had planned the murder to dispose of Maria so that it could continue without hindrance. Since her dreams had started only a few days after Corder married Moore, it was suggested that jealousy was the motive for revealing the body's resting place and that the dreams were a simple subterfuge.

I said at the start of this piece that I am related to the victim. However, if the stepmother was implicated, there is also a chance that I am related to the murder's accomplice.





24 GRAMPIAN GARDENS, LONDON, NW2 1JG

Tel 020 8455 3069 ~ Mobile 07947 573 326

MAIL ORDER ONLY

*At Loretta Lay Books we have over 5,000 true crime titles on our website including  
Notable British/English/Scottish and other Trials.*

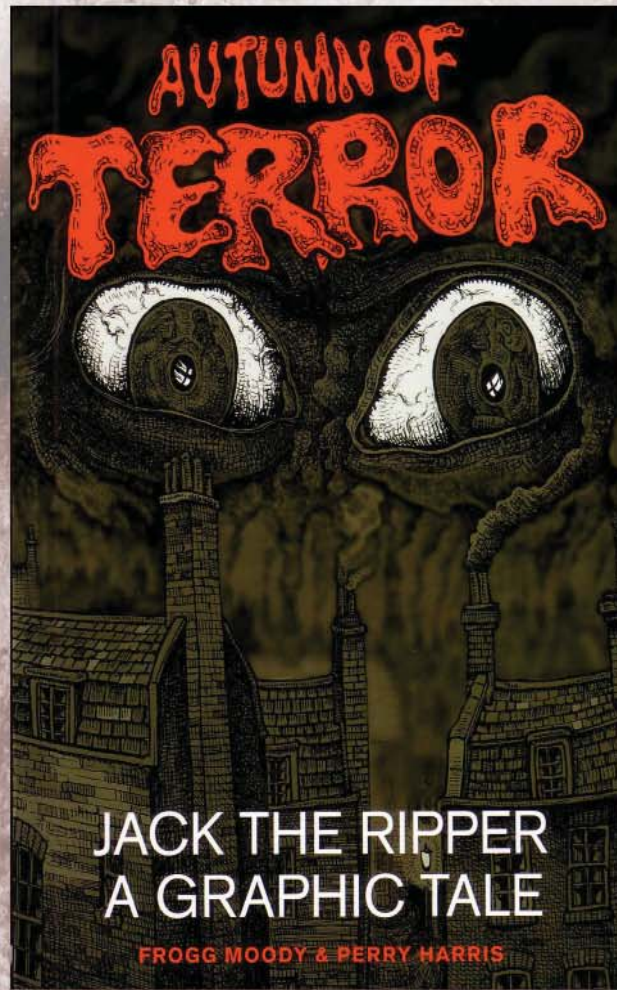
- Berry (James) My Experiences As An Executioner 1972 2nd Edn. hb/dw £60
- Payne (Leslie) The Brotherhood hb/dw £120
- Various The Union Jack Detective Magazine Supplement (2 Vols.) h/b £125
- Hill (Billy) Boss of Britain's Underworld hb/dw £140
- Camps (Francis E.) Medical and Scientific Investigations in the Christie Case h/b £150
- Ghosh (Tapan) Gandhi Murder Trial hb/dw £150
- Wraxall (Lascelles) Criminal Celebrities h/b £175
- Godwin (George) Peter Kurten : A Study in Sadism hb/dw £200
- H.M. Attorney General The Trial of German Major War Criminals (6 Vols.) softcover £250
- Dicken (E.R.H.) The History of Truncheons Signed hb/dw £350
- Adams (H.L.) The Police Encyclopaedia (8 Vol. set) h/b £400
- Dew (Walter) I Caught Crippen h/b £450
- Japan Gazette Report of Proceedings in Her Britannic Majesty's Court For Japan Relating to the Death of Walter Raymond Hallowell Carew h/b £500
- Various Famous Detective Stories (Australian) (6 Vol. set) h/b £500
- Groom (Nick) Ed. & New Intro' by : The Bloody Register (Vols. I-IV) 1999 Facsimile Reprint h/b £600
- Condon (Dr John) Jafsie Tells All! hb/dw £800
- Jackson (William) The New and Complete Newgate Calendar (6 Vol. set) h/b £800
- Nash (Jay Robert) Encyclopedia of World Crime (6 vol. set) h/b £950
- Kray (Reg & Ron) The Kray Portfolio : The Krays As Never Seen Before Signed h/b in slipcase £1250
- Lawson (John D.) Ed. by: American State Trials (17 Vols.) h/b £1500

## **INTRODUCING A NEW FEATURE: 'MAKE ME AN OFFER'!**

*If I have a higher priced title on the website which, in the current climate, is a little out of reach financially for you, please feel free to make contact via [www.laybooks.com](http://www.laybooks.com) and, literally, make me an offer.*

For these and more visit [www.laybooks.com/make\\_an\\_offer.asp](http://www.laybooks.com/make_an_offer.asp)

The History Press present



WHITECHAPEL 1888 - THE BLOOD-RED SKIES USHERED IN THE AUTUMN OF TERROR WITH PANIC ON THE STREETS OF LONDON- INSPECTOR FREDERICK GEORGE ABBERLINE IS UNDER PRESSURE TO CAPTURE JACK THE RIPPER- HE FAILED ... OR DID HE? '... I CANNOT HELP FEELING THAT THIS IS THE MAN WE STRUGGLED SO HARD TO CAPTURE 15 YEARS AGO.'

PALL MALL GAZETTE 24 MARCH 1903

Paperback: 96 pages - Publisher: The History Press  
ISBN-10: 0750954531 / ISBN-13: 978-0750954532  
Price - £9.99

Avilable from Timezone Publishing - Details  
[frogg@timezonepublishing.com](mailto:frogg@timezonepublishing.com)



*"Life is a pie fight, and then you die"*

# *Murder, Movies & Fatty Arbuckle*

**By Alex King**



*The story of the 'alleged rape and murder' of Virginia Rappe at the St. Francis Hotel 'Labor day party', in September 1921, is likely to be more sinister than the standard version of events. If we distance ourselves from the propaganda and prejudice of the time and pay attention to the actions and motivations of the periphery characters, a complex but convincing story starts to emerge.*

America was in recession, the moral puritans had banned the sale of alcohol and with 'Prohibition' in full swing, moral crusaders seeking political power decried Hollywood as promoting '*pleasure without effort*'. Then the pioneering comedy writer, actor and director, Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle, signed a 3 year contract for a million dollars a year. Adjusted for inflation, in today's money it would be worth \$43,000 000. This made him a household name across the World and a very high profile target.

Arbuckle (1887 - 1933) was a true American rags to riches story. He rose from poverty, having been abandoned by his father after his mothers death and managed to make a career out of the thing he loathed most: his weight. As with all the great comedians of the era he started in Vaudeville and quickly worked his way up to become a headlining act. Hired as an extra for the popular 'Keystone Cops', he soon became one of its stars. Hollywood then put him in his own 'Fatty Arbuckle' series of shorts with a young and unknown comedy sidekick, Charlie Chaplin. Seeking more '*creative freedom*' Arbuckle set up his own studio and production company, Comique Productions, a template copied by all the great comedians that were to follow. Chaplin was fast becoming a star on his own and Rosco needed a new comedy sidekick, he found the unknown Buster Keaton and with 'Luke the dog' started to make a series of comedy shorts that were so successful that Paramount offered him the three year, million dollars a year contract.



This was far from the fantasy of *'pleasure without effort'* – Roscoe had by the age of 34 made 155 *'two reel'* short films and his new contract stipulated that he make eighteen films a year, so he would need to work faster than his usual hectic pace. Somehow, and the stories differ as to how this happened, an accident gave him second degree burns on both his buttocks. It was decided that everyone should take 3 days off and Paramount Cameraman Fred Fischbach and Director Lowell Sherman suggested that they go to San Francisco for the Labor Day weekend. Roscoe didn't want to go, a man with burnt buttocks does not feel in the mood to party, besides it was a five hundred mile drive. Fred Fischbach bought a rubber ring for him to sit on in the car, hired the rooms, arranged for the alcohol and invited the guests – although at each of the three trials that would follow the incident, it would always be referred to as the *'Arbuckle party'*. As Roscoe would later say, *'People have talked about me as entertaining a party in my rooms at the hotel that day. It has been referred to again and again as the 'Arbuckle party'. "It wasn't my party at all. The only person who came to those rooms that day at my invitation was Mrs. Mae Taube, with whom I had made an engagement to go driving in the afternoon"'*<sup>1</sup>.

There were three rooms in the suite, 1219, 1220 and 1221. The sitting room was 1220, and the other two were bedrooms, one on each side of the sitting room. Most of the time the people stayed in 1220, but the two bedrooms were in constant use as they had en suite bathrooms and as with any party, there was a need to use the toilets. Roscoe stated to the Court that,

*"I had arisen that morning about 11 o'clock, and had put on my pyjamas, bathrobe and slippers. If I had had any idea that people were coming to the rooms, I certainly would have changed my clothes, but, as I say, the people simply walked in. When they were there, they made themselves at home, went back and forth between the rooms, and I had no time to dress. I hadn't invited them, but they were in my rooms, and I couldn't be rude"*<sup>1</sup>.

Roscoe *'was still walking around in his pyjamas, bathrobe and slippers when he saw Delmont and Rappe and expressed concern that their reputations might alert police to the gin party'*<sup>7</sup>.



*Virginia Rappe, the 'starlet' at the centre of the accusations against Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle and room 1219 (top) of the St Francis Hotel, San Francisco.*

He may also have been concerned as he had a long running feud with Henry 'Pathe' Lehrman - Rappe's 'fiancé'<sup>3</sup> and Delmont, known as 'Madame Black', had a reputation as a 'racketeer' who framed wealthy men as a blackmail scam. It was her accusations that would end Arbuckle's career and yet the DA 'would not let her take the stand as she kept changing her story'<sup>5</sup>. Why would he proceed to trial on the basis of the accusations from such a person, not once, but three times? It seems that someone was very persistent in trying to pin something on Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle.

There are different versions of what is alleged to have happened next. What is agreed is that Arbuckle entered his room and locked the door to dress for his 3 o'clock appointment. He walked into the bathroom of room 1219 to find Virginia Rappe on the floor, vomiting in the toilet.



**FATTY' ARBUCKLE TO GO ON TRIAL FOR LIFE FOR VIRGINIA RAPPE'S DEATH**

**Figures in the Arbuckle Tragedy**

An unusual case of Virginia Rappe, motion picture actress, for whose death Roscoe ("Fatty") Arbuckle will stand trial on a charge of murder.



**DAILY INQUIRY UNCOVERS PRICE FIXING SYSTEM**

Washington, Sept. 22.—(AP)—The daily inquiry into the price fixing system uncovered by the Senate committee on the price fixing system in the oil industry has been continued today. The committee today heard testimony from a former official of the American Petroleum Institute, who admitted that the institute had a plan to fix prices for oil products.

**Jane Addams Puts Peace to Irish Women**

LONDON, Sept. 22.—(AP)—Jane Addams, the American peace worker, today visited the women of Ireland and urged them to put an end to the civil war in Ireland. She said that the only way to end the war was through peace.

**U. S. TO SHOW UP 'SECRET' ARMING OF BIP POWERS**

WASHINGTON, Sept. 22.—(AP)—The American "big stick" policy of international relations will show up the "secret" arming of the powers of the world, according to a statement today issued by the State Department. The statement said that the United States would show the world that it was not afraid to stand up for its principles.

**NEARER BEER AND MORE TAX URGED**

WASHINGTON, Sept. 22.—(AP)—The House today urged that the tax on beer be increased and that the tax on other beverages be decreased. The bill would also increase the tax on liquor and decrease the tax on wine.

**Extreme Beer Prices**

The House today passed a bill to increase the tax on beer and to decrease the tax on other beverages. The bill would also increase the tax on liquor and decrease the tax on wine. The bill was passed by a vote of 215 to 195.

He held her while she vomited again, before sitting her up and giving her several glasses of water. He then went for help. When he returned with some of the guests, Virginia was sitting on the edge of the bed in room 1219, tearing at her clothes and screaming. She was thought to be 'suffering from the effects of intoxication' and the hotel doctor was called.

There are three important points about Dr Beardslee's testimony: 1. Rappe told him that, "Roscoe didn't do anything"<sup>74</sup>. Why would Rappe have made this statement at this point as no accusation had been made? Did she know that Delmont was going to make an accusation and try to stop an innocent man from being framed? 2. The DA had Rappe's comment 'struck from the record as hear-say' and yet this isn't 'hear-say', it is a direct statement from the victim to a main witness. 3. Dr Beardslee stated that Rappe needed immediate hospital treatment requiring 'surgical intervention' and yet he did not hospitalize her, but injected her with Morphine that hid the true nature of

condition. It is the failure to hospitalize Rappe and the injecting her with Morphine that would ultimately lead to her death. However, no one would attempt to prosecute the doctor for manslaughter.

Apparently, Delmont was unsatisfied with Dr Beardslee and called her own doctor, Dr Rumwell. There is no statement of what it was that caused her to be unsatisfied. Is Delmont's calling Dr Rumwell the reason that Dr Beardslee did not hospitalize Rappe, as he would effectively be off the case? Was it Delmont's intention to prevent Rappe from being hospitalised? In any event, Dr Rumwell testified that, not only had Virginia never said anything to him that implicated Arbuckle, he was also able to see that, whatever else she was suffering from, Virginia had gonorrhoea. The Press throughout the Trial would portray Virginia as a virgin.

One thing is obvious: Virginia was seriously ill before she even came to the party. A hotel nurse attended Rappe and noted that she had a 'vaginal discharge' from a 'running abscess'



and recognized that she was suffering from venereal disease (as was her studio director 'fiancé') but still she was not hospitalized. Dr Rumwell waited until 3 days after the party before concluding that she be 'hospitalized immediately'. However, Rappe was sent to a 'maternity hospital', which suggests that she was pregnant - 'although the hospital was also widely known for carrying out abortions'<sup>6</sup>. The delay in hospital treatment effectively ensured that Virginia Rappe would die on September 9, 1921 from peritonitis caused by a ruptured bladder.

It was then that Delmont accused Arbuckle of the rape and murder of Virginia Rappe. Arbuckle had returned to Hollywood by boat, as had been pre-arranged, the day after the party. He would later say that, "the first indication I had that Ms Rappe was suffering from anything serious is when they told me she was dead".

With the news of the allegations against Arbuckle, the Press and 'women's groups' instigated a sensationalist smear campaign against Arbuckle that ensured that public hostility was such that an impartial jury, and so a fair trial, would be an impossibility.

Worse, Arbuckle's irreverent comic screen persona played against him and it seemed that the American public were perfectly willing to believe he was guilty. So called 'Morality groups' were 'calling for Arbuckle's execution' and he had not even been on trial.

The lawyer, Earl Rogers said of the accusations against Fatty, "They will make it very tough on him, because of his weight. A man of that enormous fatness being charged with the rape of a young girl will prejudice them, even just the thought of it."<sup>5</sup> For the general public Fatty was no longer a figure of fun. "I don't understand it", said Arbuckle, "one minute I'm the guy everybody loves, the next I'm the guy everybody loves to hate".

There was a problem, the Prosecution soon became aware that despite the accusations, prosecuting Arbuckle for murder was not feasible and they decided to proceed to trial on the charge to 'Manslaughter'. However, when we look at the allegations, who made them, the time sequence and Roscoe Arbuckle's minimal involvement, proceeding to trial on such a basis seems absurd. The usual claim is that in prosecuting a star, Matthew Brady, the District Attorney, sought stardom for himself as a route to political power. This is not a likely motive as being so bullish, on such a weak case, against such a high profile person, was more likely to







that one holdout named Helen Hubbard had announced to them in private that she would vote guilty "until hell freezes over" and that she refused to discuss the evidence, look at the exhibits, or read the trial transcripts. All others voted for acquittal until at the end one male juror joined Hubbard<sup>4</sup>. It was discovered later that Hubbard's husband was a lawyer who worked with the D.A.'s office and therefore she should never have been on the Jury. This looks like the Jury was rigged.

The Prosecution had to be acting criminally in trying to prosecute someone that they knew was innocent. Evidence was falsified or suppressed and it was only at the third trial that the Autopsy report was introduced that stated that there 'were no marks of violence on the body, no signs that the girl had been attacked in any way'.



It was the Prosecution who prevented Delmont, 'the witness who never witnessed', from testifying as 'she kept changing her story'. There was also the little matter of her history as a blackmailer and also two telegrams she had sent to Attorneys in San Diego and Los Angeles that read:

**'WE HAVE ROSCOE ARBUCKLE IN A HOLE HERE CHANCE TO MAKE SOME MONEY OUT OF HIM'.**



From this statement we might think that this was a simple scam that went wrong. It would be stupid for a blackmailer to send such a telegram to anyone, let alone two Attorneys, and convenient that the Defence would get possession of such a document at the third trial. But was it convenient or was it intentional, a distraction from the big picture? How did Delmont, a known blackmailer of wealthy men, get to be at a small, private party?

In *'Frame Up!'*, Andy Edmonds states that Roscoe Arbuckle was framed. This is obviously the case, but by who and why? The focus of the trials and subsequent books and articles tends to be on Arbuckle, Rappe and Delmont but what of *'friend'* and director Fred Fischbach?

Room 1219 was not *'Roscoe's room'* as was claimed, it was *'Fischbach and Arbuckle's room'*<sup>2</sup>. It was claimed at all three trials that it was *'Roscoe's Party'* and yet it was Fischbach that rented the rooms, obtained the liquor and invited the guests, telling Roscoe, *"let me take care of everything when we get to Frisco, I've got connections"*<sup>2</sup>. In David Yallop's book, *'The day the laughter stopped'*<sup>4</sup>, Arbuckle did not want to party and it was Fischbach who pressurised him into going. In *'I Fatty'*<sup>3</sup>, by Jerry Stahl, it states that Fred Fischbach had *'mounting gambling debts'*. Stahl suggests that Delmont *'just tagged along'*, however given her reputation, if Fischbach had been looking out for Arbuckle's interests then it is highly unlikely that he would have let a known embezzler of the wealthy attend a party with the



most highly paid comedian in the World. It just does not look like an accident.

In *'the day the laughter stopped'*, Yallop states that it was Fischbach that invited Rappe and in his version it is presented as a *'chance encounter'*, but was it? If that assertion is correct, then why did Roscoe *'express concern'* at finding these people at the party? As Hollywood's wealthiest star he had good reason to be concerned. As it was Fischbach that got Delmont to the party was he in some way connected to the events that would follow?

If Fischbach was involved was it just him and Delmont or were some of his close associates also involved? There was motive for Henry *'Pathe' Lehrman - Rappe's 'fiancé'* wanting her out the way. Rappe was becoming a problem, but getting rid of her it might not be easy as she was pregnant and it was possibly his baby. The Testimony of Irene Morgan, housekeeper to Virginia Rappe, shows that Rappe could not have been easy to live with and she was more than a little volatile. Is this the real reason, that despite Dr Beardslee stating that Rappe needed *'surgical intervention immediately'*, there was a concerted effort to ensure she had no hospital treatment until it was too late. There is also the matter of the long running feud with Arbuckle and so a motive for attempting to frame him for the murder.

Jerry Stahl<sup>3</sup> put forward a theory that Paramount boss Adolph Zukor was involved. But why would Paramount want to bring down their main star?

*'Arbuckle had six different feature films running in Los Angeles that week'*, he had his own studio and production company, he was the first actor/director/writer to retain the rights to his own pictures and made sure that he had a share of the profits when he signed with Paramount. Other stars such as Chaplin were following his lead and this would not have endeared him to the studio system. Days before the Paramount deal, Roscoe Arbuckle had simply signed over Comique Studios to Buster Keaton, so for all the millions in the Paramount deal, Arbuckle had managed to keep a completely separate system operational and outside of their control. This would not have gone down well with a studio system obsessed with control.

Arbuckle was framed and the Jury at the third Trial were fully aware of this. At 5:10 on April 12th, 1922, The jury retired to consider its verdict. Six minutes later, they returned. A standing vote had been unanimous in favour of acquittal. The six minutes had been spent composing a remarkable statement which the jury foreman asked to read out in full:

**"Acquittal is not enough for Roscoe Arbuckle. We feel that a great injustice has been done him. We feel also that it was only our plain duty to give him his exoneration, under the evidence, for there was not the slightest proof to connect him in any way with the commission of a crime."**

**"He was manly throughout the case, and told a straight forward story on the witness stand, which we all believed."**

**"The happening at the hotel was an unfortunate affair for which Arbuckle, so the evidence shows, was in no way responsible."**

**"We wish him success and hope that the American people will take the judgement of fourteen men and women that Roscoe Arbuckle is entirely innocent and free from all blame."**

Despite being found innocent of any crime, 6 days after the acquittal William H. Hays, the newly appointed Hollywood Censor, banned Roscoe Arbuckle from working in movies and his movies from being shown in theatres. Hays was an employee and so the decision was directed by Arbuckle's employers at Paramount, Adolph Zukor and Jesse Lasky<sup>3</sup>. However, realizing the possible outcry if they were seen to be effectively ending Roscoe's cinematic career, they persuaded the newly-installed Hays to undertake the action as censorship for the public good.

This was more than just a total ban of anything connected to Arbuckle, the first time that any action like this had been made by Hollywood, Arbuckle's films were not shelved, they were actively destroyed. From 1922 to 1932, Roscoe was unable to work in film under his real name. Finally in 1932, all of Hollywood finally rallied behind him, decrying the injustice which had been done. This persecution of a man found innocent of any crime starts to support the idea that Hollywood was connected to the *'frame up'* of Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle.



There is something fascinating about fallen greatness, a subject so often used in comedy. Lost in all the intrigue surrounding the Trial is Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle as one of the key figures of early cinema comedy. Arbuckle is the only person to have the honour of having the three greatest silent film comedians, Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, and Buster Keaton, appear in supporting roles in his films. According to Harold Lloyd, Arbuckle was the first film-maker to use preview audiences to see how to improve his comedies.

Before Roscoe, comedy shorts emphasized the 'motion' in 'motion pictures'. The films start at a run and gain speed until you lose track of who's being chased and why. In films such as 'Fatty and Mabel adrift' Roscoe introduces a slower almost Surreal world where he and Mabel Normand delighted the public with their adorable antics.

As a Director he became known for his use of unusual camera angles and effects, notice how the camera slowly goes out of focus in 'Good Night, Nurse' as his character loses consciousness. He felt that his fans were intelligent enough to appreciate what he referred to as 'scenic beauty' on film, in addition to the strictly comic bits, and he incorporated more of this in his work as he grew more adept at directing.



Arbuckle in 'Backstage' this gag was later re-used by Buster Keaton in 'Steamboat Bill' (above) and in the 'Rough House' (1917) doing the bread roll dance (below)



Arbuckle's comedy legacy is loaded with original and creative comic scenes. If you take a close look at Roscoe's "Rough House", you will see a routine which was the inspiration for Charlie Chaplin's famous 'dance of the dinner rolls' from "The Gold Rush". This was Roscoe apparently mimicking Chaplin's walk with the dinner rolls. Chaplin would add this to his own film seven years after the Arbuckle scandal. Was he reminding audiences or simply tipping his hat to an early influence and mentor?

Buster Keaton, who personally supported Arbuckle after the ban, often has some reworking of an Arbuckle gag in his films, some of which are his most famous scenes, such as the building front collapse in Steamboat Bill (originally in 'Backstage') that happens in a storm with similarities to the start of 'Good Night, Nurse'.

Banned from working, his films no longer in Theatres and his protégées building on his legacy without him Arbuckle was prevented from progressing in the way that Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin would over the decade following his trial. His films are filled with such charming buffoonery that it is sad that he is now primarily remembered as the central figure

in Hollywood's first scandal.

Simple common sense and a rudimentary review of the facts indicate that Roscoe Arbuckle was completely innocent. The sad fact is that Virginia Rappe may have lived had she been hospitalized when first examined and there seems to be no believable explanation why this did not happen. Rappe may or may not have been murdered, but it certainly wasn't by Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle - like her, he was a victim. As Louise Brooks said when she found herself at the end of her career with a director working under a pseudonym, "*it was such an amazing thing for me to come in to make this broken-down picture, and to find my director was the great Roscoe Arbuckle. I thought he was magnificent in films. He made no attempt to direct this picture. He sat in his chair like a man dead. He had been very nice and sweetly dead ever since the scandal that ruined his career*".

Rosco 'Fatty' Arbuckle may soon be a household name once again as James Franco is reported as '*being in production*' on a film with the working title of '*Fatty Arbuckle*'.

#### Sources:

1. MOVIE WEEKLY - December 31, 1922 ; 'Roscoe Arbuckle in his own words'.
2. crimelibrary.com 'Fatty Arbuckle and the death of Virginia Rappe' by Denise Noe.
3. Jerry Stahl - I Fatty - ISBN-13: 978-0749082130 (2004)
4. David Yallop - 'The Day the Laughter Stopped' (1991). London: Transworld Publishers. ISBN 055213452X.
5. Andy Edmonds - 'Frame-Up!' (1991). 'The Untold Story of Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle'. New York, NY: William Morrow & Company. ISBN 0688091296.
6. Crime Magazine 'no more laughs for the fat man' by Benjamin Welton
7. Smithsonian.com - 'The skinny on Fatty Arbuckle' (Nov 8, 2011) - by Gilbert King.
8. Wikipedia - Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle.







**CASEBOOK CLASSIC CRIME**  
**LIVE**  
LONDON CONFERENCE 2015  
**'MISARRIAGES OF JUSTICE'**

PROFESSOR DAVID TAYLOR  
DEBATING THE DEATH PENALTY IN  
19TH AND 20TH CENTURY ENGLAND

MONICA WELLER  
"HOW I CAME TO GHOST-WRITE  
RUTH ELLIS MY SISTER'S SECRET LIFE"

ROBIN ODELL  
"LET HIM HAVE IT CHRIS!"

JONATHAN OATES  
THE MYTH OF THE INNOCENCE OF  
TIMOTHY EVANS

WILLIAM BEADLE  
LEE HARVEY OSWALD

KATE COLQUHOUN  
DID SHE KILL HIM?  
MRS FLORENCE MAYBRICK

SATURDAY MAY 2ND 2015 • DIRTY DICKS PUB • 10.00AM - 6.00PM  
WWW.TIMEZONEPUBLISHING.COM

How I came to ghost write:  
'Ruth Ellis - my sister's  
secret life'.

**Monica Weller**

**Casebook: Classic Crime**

2015 Conference

**Dirty Dicks Pub**

May 2nd - 10 AM - 6 PM

Tickets: email - [frogg@timezonepublishing.com](mailto:frogg@timezonepublishing.com)

# PARTING SHOT



By Frogg Moody

Does crime pay? Not if you get caught, so 'keep calm' and hide the evidence – in this case on the back page of Issue 1 of **CASEBOOK: CLASSIC CRIME**. Traditionally this is a place for slightly sordid adverts and 'personal columns', which might make it the appropriate place to explain how I became to be involved in the magazine.

It probably says something about the human psyche that there appears to be so much interest in criminality by people not classed as 'criminals' and we may need to speak with a psychologist on that subject at a later date. For myself, the idea for the magazine first came to me during my association with one of the great true crime writers, Robin Odell. In 2011, I had published a series of Robin's true crime lectures ('Written & Red – The True Crime Lectures' Timezone Publishing) and after many discussions on the subject,

## **CASEBOOK: CLASSIC CRIME**

has been released and we are delighted to have Robin Odell as our patron.

The subject of 'true crime' will be studied and debated in two ways.

(1) A PDF magazine\* featuring true crime articles, crime surveys, reviews etc from worldwide cases both past and present.

(2) A themed true crime London Conference\* every year featuring debates and expert guest speakers.

We would very much welcome crime articles, letters, photographs and anything legal related to the world of true crime – particularly from any criminal 'masterminds' and those wanting to 'spill the beans' so-to-speak. The incarcerated have plenty of time on their hands, so we're hopeful. Details can be obtained by emailing me at

[frogg@timezonepublishing.com](mailto:frogg@timezonepublishing.com)

*\* The PDF magazine (published twice a year) is available to delegates of the CASEBOOK: CLASSIC CRIME –Live London Conference. Complimentary electronic copies are currently available to subscribers to Casebook Classic Crime on receipt of a valid name and email address. Membership will entitle subscribers to a discount on entry to future annual CASEBOOK: CLASSIC CRIME London Conferences.*

*\* The theme at the first London conference will be 'Miscarriages of Justice' and features six guest speakers – if you have got this far, you will have seen Details of this throughout the magazine.*

# READ

**CASEBOOK: CLASSIC CRIME**

**ARTICLES**

**EVENTS**

**COMMENT**

**HISTORY**

**RESEARCH**

**MEMOIR INTERVIEWS**

**SURVEYS**

**ALL IN ONE ELECTRONIC MAGAZINE**

**DELIVERED TO YOUR IN BOX**

**IN PDF AND FOR IPAD,  
KINDLE, KOBO**

**AVAILABLE ALSO ON ALL GOOD NEWSSTANDS  
SUBSCRIBE TODAY**

**FROGG@TIMEZONEPUBLISHING.COM**

# CONTRIBUTORS

## BEN JOHNSON



Ben Johnson is a crime writer who has been published on both sides of the Atlantic. Known for his court reporting, it was inevitable that he would enter the world of true crime writing and recently produced a cover article for a popular American crime magazine. His reputation and portfolio have grown ever since, and he has produced hundreds of articles in the true crime genre. With an extensive knowledge of both UK and international crime, no subject is too obscure to investigate.

---

## FROGG MOODY



Frogg Moody is an author of a number of historic crime books and more recently, a Graphic novel called 'Autumn of Terror' (Published by History Press). He formed the Salisbury Timezone Group to promote history through Books, Magazines, Conferences and Exhibitions. In 2010 Frogg was presented with the British Association for Local History Award for Personal Achievement. He is editor of London's 'Whitechapel Journal' which studies Jack the Ripper and has a worldwide membership.

---

## LINDA STRATMANN



Linda Stratmann is the author of twelve non-fiction books mainly about true crime, but also including a history of chloroform, a study of the Illustrated Police News and an acclaimed biography of the Marquess of Queensberry. The Children of Silence, will be published in April. In September Linda launches a new fiction series set in 1870s Brighton.

[www.lindastratmann.com](http://www.lindastratmann.com)

Twitter @LindaStratmann

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Books-by-Linda-Stratmann/270261905489>

---

## SUE PARRY



Sue is on the committee of London's Whitechapel Society, an organisation who study the life and times of Jack the Ripper. Her interest in the Jack the Ripper crimes started in 1988 when she found that the famous "Cambridge Apostles" photograph containing Prince Eddy and J K Stephen also contained a distant family member. Sue's other interest is the Red Barn Murder; though the facts surrounding this case are well known Sue's own investigations have uncovered some very interesting facts...

---

## ALEX KING



Alex is an Architect and illustrator who is open to ideas. His writing has been published internationally.

# SUBMISSIONS

Casebook: Classic Crime magazine accepts articles, images and artwork for publication. Please send copies of the work in electronic format only. Contact

[frogg@timezonepublishing.com](mailto:frogg@timezonepublishing.com)

addressed for the attention of Frogg Moody.

When submitting work please note the following:

- \*Casebook Classic Crime does not pay for submissions.
- \*Submitters must be copyright holders. You will be deemed responsible if a claim is made against Casebook: Classic Crime Magazine for copyright infringement. By submitting work you grant permission to publish and distribute your work in any shape or form, however, you will retain the copyrights to your images/work.
- \*Casebook Classic Crime Magazine will not be held accountable for misspelled or missing credits. It is the submitter's responsibility to provide this information. Should you forget a credit or misspell them we will NOT change it after launch. So it is extremely important to get this information correct the first time. However if it is Casebook: Classic Crime Magazine who have made the mistake in your credit, please notify us so that we can change it immediately.
- \* Once submission is accepted it must not be published in any other magazine, website or social media platform until after the relevant issue has launched. Casebook: Classic Crime Magazine reserves the right to pull your content from the magazine without your consent should it be discovered that it has been published prematurely or is in breach of copyright.
- \*By submitting you grant us permission to use your submission in any shape or form for any purpose related to the Casebook Classic Crime Magazine brand. You also allow for Casebook Classic Crime Magazine to colour-correct or crop your images to best fit into the publication.



# NOTICEBOARD



**SHERLOCK  
HOLMES**  
THE MAN WHO  
NEVER LIVED  
AND WILL  
NEVER DIE



Sponsored by  
**SHAW PRINCE &  
WEDDERBURN**  
Technology Partner  
**NEC**

Media Partner  
**THE MALTBY**  
THE MALTBY



## **Sleeping with Sherlock**

Experience the Museum of London and Sherlock Holmes exhibition like never before, in the first ever all-night event! The programme includes a three-course dinner, a talk by Angela Buckley about Detective Caminada, a real-life Sherlock Holmes, sleuthing workshops and a Sherlock movie marathon.

**Saturday 14 February and Saturday 28 March – from 7.30 pm**

Tickets --- £175 including two meals

Tickets available from the Museum of London

---

## **SLEUTHFEST 2015**

100 Fairway Drive Deerfield Beach, Florida 3344133441 United States

February 26 @ 8.00am – March 1 @ 5.00pm

Mystery Writers of America's premier conference for writers and fans including sessions and workshops.

For details email [sleuthfestinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:sleuthfestinfo@yahoo.com)

---

## **THE WHITECHAPEL SOCIETY**

This society meets in London's East End and promotes the study of Jack the Ripper and associated Victorian/Edwardian social history through meetings, in-house magazine, books and walks.

The Whitechapel Society hosts six meetings per year all with a guest speakers.

For details contact – Susan Parry at - [susanmarieparry@hotmail.com](mailto:susanmarieparry@hotmail.com)

---

## **DEALEY PLAZA UK**

The principal aim of this group is to bring together interested people for the mutual exchange of views, opinions and information pertaining to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

For Details contact - <http://www.dealeyplazauk.org.uk/>

---

## **THE JACK THE RIPPER CONFERENCE**

**Nottingham 2015.**

**21-23 August 2015**

The Jack the Ripper Conference is an annual event held around the UK for researchers, authors, historians and enthusiasts of the case of Jack the Ripper and the Whitechapel Murders.

For details and bookings visit the website - <http://www.ripperconference.com/>

---

## **THE CRIME AND PUNISHMENT COLLECTIONS NETWORK**

Crime and Punishment Collections Network (CaP) - is a network of museums, libraries, archives and heritage sites concerned with the topic of crime and punishment. We aim to represent, promote and assist museums, libraries, archives and heritage sites which either hold collections or manage sites related to the topic of criminal justice.

For details contact - <https://capcollections.wordpress.com/>

cutting edge stuff



# CASEBOOK: CLASSIC CRIME

subscribe: [frogg@timezonepublishing.com](mailto:frogg@timezonepublishing.com)



# CASEBOOK: CLASSIC CRIME

CASEBOOK : CLASSIC CRIME - FIRST EDITION - CONFERENCE SPECIAL 2015